



ZIONISM AND THE UN DEBATES BEFORE THE FORMATION OF ISRAEL

ABSTRACT

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BY

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ABSTRACT

Zionism is still an on-going movement. Its militancy is on the increase and its expansionism has not yet been contained. The Palestinian people are still victims of the worst kind of oppression emanating from a state which is overtly theocratic in nature. It is an anathema that the so-called civilized world should tolerate the worst kind of tyranny and violation of human rights. The present day behaviour of Zionists and of the major world powers can be understood only if one sees the phenomena in retrospect. The Russian pogroms of 1880s seem to set in motion a process which led ultimately to the UN debates, a prelude to the formation of Israel.

An attempt has been made here to discuss Zionist activities directed towards the establishment of a Jewish state. The focus is on the first half of the twentieth century. During this period Zionists organised and developed strategic contacts with key figures in Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union - the powers which were most important in deciding the issue. The concerted effort of the Zionists to promote the cause of Israel in these countries and finally in the United Nations General Assembly, proved to be highly successful. The U.N. Partition Resolution of 1947 marks the culmination of this process.

"The word 'Zionism' appeared at the end of the nineteenth century to designate a cluster of different movements, the common element of which was the project of giving world Jewry a spiritual, territorial or state centre, usually located in Palestine" Naturally the Zionist idea took many forms particularly in its formative period, and it is not surprising that sometimes its strands negated each other.

'Zionism' as a concept or ideology has been understood from many angles. For some it is a permanent national calling of all Jewry. Therefore it is justified and beneficial. For others, it is subservient to universal values, and whether these values are taken from Judaism, liberal humanism or from international proletarianism. For those who believe in universal human values and international proletarianism, Zionism is harmful and they consider it to be capitalism in its imperialist stage.

The western thinking and efforts lent a helping hand to the growth of Zionism. Two European developments in the second half of the nineteenth century created a congenial atmosphere for the imperialist conceived Zionist idea. The first was direct and indirect impact of the intellectual and political growth of European chauvinist nationalism. The

pogroms in Russia in 1881 were the second European development which provided impetus to the Zionist idea. On account of these pogroms there was a mass exodus of Jews to other countries of Eastern and Western Europe. This was a vital reason for the failure of Haskalah (Assimilationist) movement. It was substituted by the movement of "Lovers of Zion" which was inspired by Leo Pinsker's pamphlet, 'Auto Emancipation'. Societies were formed in Jewish centres to chalk out a programme for the settlement of Jews in Palestine and to revive the Hebrew language.

If it was in Eastern Europe that conditions were ripe for Zionist movement and it was the 'Pale of Settlement' that continuously provided the membership of the movement, it was only in Western Europe that conditions were congenial for a strategic political concept of Jewish nationalism. The concept of political Zionism evolved in Vienna, Theodor Herzl, provided the political and organisational leadership of the new movement. Herzl was the most important and chief dispenser of the Jewish political and social ideas. It has been rightly said that Zionism as a true political movement and as an international force was to all intents and purposes Herzl's intention and creation.

The fundamental concepts regarding Herzl's thought and Zionist outlook are in his *Der Judenstaat*. The very first

sentence of Judenstaat reads, "The idea which I have developed in this pamphlet is a very old one: It is the restoration of the Jewish state". Herzl has enumerated his plan in this thirty page pamphlet. He says: "My plan is simple in design but complicated in execution". The plan consisted of two parts: Assumption of responsibility for Jewish national officers by a political body to be called "the Society of Jews", and management of both the exodus of the Jews and their resettlement by a technical body to be called the Jewish Company. The first was to contact the relevant governments and seek to obtain their consent for the attainment of Jewish sovereignty over a neutral piece of land, and then administer the territory as a provisional government. The second was to take form of a chartered company established in London under English law. The company would have to be provided with handsome working capital and would provide land, housing and employment in the new country.

Herzl had indeed pondered over Erez Israel as the most adequate land for Jews to settle. He mentioned, "It is more and more to the interest of the civilized nations and of civilizations in general that a cultural station be established on the shortest route to Asia Palestine is this station and we Jews are the bearers of culture who are ready

to give our property and our lives to bring about this creation".

Herzl justified the choice of Palestine on the vague and spurious historical claim. He wrote, "Palestine is our - memorable historic home. The very name of Palestine would attract our people with a force of marvelous potency".

However, the primary purpose of *Der Judenstaat* was tactical to make the issue public and to draw new allies. After the publication of the pamphlet he wrote:

The Essay I have published has gained me the greatest of hatreds and the warmest of friendships... the discussion is now open and, it seems, will soon reach the parliament.

The idea of calling a general assembly of Zionists was a second major step taken up by Herzl. On March 7, 1897, a decision to convene a Zionist Congress was taken during a two day conference of a group of lovers of Zion from Berlin. Herzl was there with his associates from Austria to chalk out a plan for a cooperative working relationship with the Berlin circle.

The first Zionist Congress held at Basle was an unprecedented event. The Congress opened on Sunday morning, 24 August 1897 and continued for three days, after which it

constituted' a number of organisations to promote its aims and objectives. The key provision of the Congress states, "The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by Public Law". A reading of Herzl's diaries reveal that the term "public law" refers to nothing but the patronage of the imperialist powers. He envisaged that the European powers would back Zionism for one of the three main motives:

1. Imperialist self interest;
2. Ridding themselves of Jews and antisemitism (in west European case avoiding the influx of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe), and
3. Using organised Jewish influence to combat revolutionary movements and other internal factors.

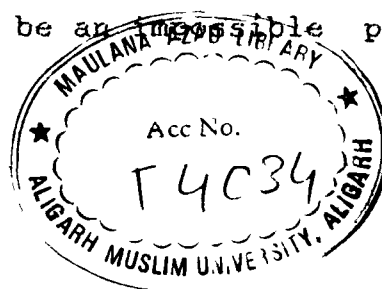
Four means were adopted to obtain this objective:

- (i) The programmatic encouragement of the settlement of Palestine with Jewish agricultural workers, labourers and artisans.
- (ii) The unification and organisation of all Jewry into local and general groups in accordance with the laws of respective country.
- (iii) The strengthening of Jewish self-awareness and national consciousness.

(iv) The preparation of activity for obtaining the consent of the various governments, necessary for the fulfilment of the aims of Zionism.

The first president of the Zionist Congress Theodor Herzl started translating the programmes of Basle Congress into action. However Zionism did not gain any recognition at the begining of the World War I.

The great conception of Herzl, the gigantic enthusiasm of the Basle Congress and the untiring efforts of the founder of political Zionism appeared to have fizzled out by the begining of the World War I. It appears that if the war had not taken place with all its schemes on the part of the Allied Powers, and the situation created during and after the war, political Zionism would have died out. The War, the intensified imperialist drive in West Asia and the winning over of the West European Jews and many others, who were reluctant at the beginning, brought a new batch of East European Jewish leaders, less imaginative but more pragmatic than Herzl, to the forefront. They furthered the idea of Herzl and through a long, concerted and internationally orchestrated propaganda and effort, ultimately achieved Israel, which appeared to be an impossible proposition at the beginning.



The diplomatic initiative, administrative preparation and right use of money power provide the historical explanation of the creation of Israel. Three leaders played the most crucial role. Weizmann was a past master as far as sophisticated manipulation was concerned. Ben Gurion was a genius at mass conversion to Zionism and settlement, and Jabontinsk, of expansionist design and armed strategy. These three pragmatic approaches lay at the root of evolution of Zionism. Weizmann resorted to the technique of "gradualism" and developed it into a political technique. For Weizmann the Balfour Declaration was only a beginning. From 1917 onwards he attempted ceaselessly to circumvent its restrictive clauses but never openly challenged them. He maintained the same strategy towards Churchill White Paper. In the same way he accepted the partition plan, its limited territorial concessions which could be expanded in time.

David Bin Gurion attached great importance to the concept of "ingathering". Gurion insisted that Zionism demanded immigration to Israel and allegiance to a single Jewish nationality, this reflected a horizon too limited for the Jews of the world. His narrow thinking that Zionists in the diaspora were under obligation to assist the state of Israel unconditionally was said to be reactionary.

To an emancipated Jew and the modern man the premise of "ingathering" was retrogressive.

Nevertheless the Zionist like Weizmann, Ben Gurion, Juda Magnes and Abba Hillel Silver, who happened to be the pivotal actors on behalf of Zionism, activated other actors, whom we may call the secondary actors, particularly U.K., U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. and ultimately through them reached the United Nations.

The struggle over Palestine had already emerged during World War I. On account of the exigencies of War the British calculated that a public expression of support for the principle of a Jewish national home in Palestine would prompt the World Zionist Organization to mobilize American Jews in support of the United States' entry into the war on the side of the Allied powers. The second reason was, the German Jews might shift their allegiance. The third reason was that the Russian Jews might persuade Russia not to abandon the conflict. There was another contradictory pledge given to the Arabs. Sir Henry McMahon had been authorized to conduct a correspondence with Sharif Hussein encouraging him to revolt against the Turks which would be later rewarded in Arab independence.

After World War I Great Britain became the mandatory power over Palestine. The Palestine Mandate was doomed to failure from its very inception. The British never succeeded in rallying to their support either the Jews or the Arabs. The latter never recognized the Balfour Declaration, or Britain's rights to impose it on Palestine. The Jews' cooperation when given was conditional on a "Zionist" interpretation of that declaration, and their support was withdrawn in 1939, when in their view the British reneged on their international obligations to the Jewish people. By 1945, with both parties to the conflict determined to implement their own blue print for Palestine in the world order, the Mandate had indeed become intractable.

The foreign secretary, Earnest Bevin, pursued the solution of a "binational state" in the hope that concerted action with the United States might guarantee Jewish minority, alienating the Arab majority, thereby allowing Britain to remain on good terms with the Arab World generally. The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry of 1946 was such an attempt by Britain to convince the Americans of the inequity of creating a white settler minority in Palestine. However, the Zionist influence in the United States and the American suspicion of British imperialism, frustrated Bevin's objective. The British were unable to

persuade the Americans to check expansionist Zionist aims that appeared to jeopardize Britains position in the Middle East.

The policy of the United States centered on the perspective of its President. The whole American political system is dominated by the President. The President can ignore the advice of his secretaries and other experts in the context of his domestic politics. On the crucial issue of Palestine the domestic compulsions proved to be more compelling for the President than the almost objective advice of the Secretaries of State and Defense. This situation was ably exploited by the Zionists who through their influence mechanism and electoral weight could mould President's thinking and have the decision in their favour. While the American foreign policy experts were closer to their British colleagues in opposing Zionist aspirations, the President repeatedly overruled their diplomatic advisors.

Roosevelt was apparently moved by a naive belief that the Balfour Declaration had "promised" Palestine to the Jews, and that the Arabs had to be bought off. Far more significant were Truman's decisions. There has been erratic shifts in United States policies on Palestine, particularly

after the question was placed on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly. The State Department and the White House were both writing the policies, each with a different constituency in mind. State was responding chiefly to pressures of the cold war as it also bore upon the Middle East, and the White House, chiefly to domestic pressures built up by the American Zionists. So long as the president did not personally intervene State went its own way. Thus the American position before the General Assembly's Ad hoc Committee on Palestine in the fall of 1947 was developed essentially by State, and the pressures on friendly delegations before the final vote in the plenary Assembly by the White House which virtually worked on the dictates of the Zionist lobby. Furthermore, the way United States policy towards Palestine was forced through the United Nations in 1947, not only denegated the status of United Nations but also United States lost face in its dealings with the United Nations.

The Soviet policies towards Palestine were determined by an interplay between an internal "Jewish factor" and the perceived requirements of the Soviet interests in the Middle East as a whole in the context of the super power struggle.

After the Jewish diaspora of 70 A.D. Russia had been the largest home of the Jews. Among the Russian Jewry

Zionism as an idea and as a movement predates Herzl's Judenstaat and the emergence of the World Zionist Organisation. The Christian Czars hated the Jews and the incipient Zionism alike. With the commencement of Revolution in 1917 Zionism was declared as an reactionary ideology. The British support to the Jewish National Home in Palestine through the Balfour Declaration provided added impetus to Communist anathema towards Zionism. The Declaration was aimed to deflect or subvert the support of the Jews for the revolution at a critical moment, but was also considered a vehicle of British imperialism and as a means to keep in check the revolutionary Arab masses.

However, with the advent of the World War II Stalin started to cultivate the Jews and the Zionists alike. Arab, especially the Palestinian leadership fell from grace. Moreover, Kremlin, before it could commit itself openly to the Zionists, had to outmaneuver Anglo-American moves to exclude Moscow from attempts to resolve the Palestinian problem. Kremlin in 1946-47 retaliated by insisting that any change in "the status of dependent territories" should be decided by the United Nations. Stalin's persistence paid off in February 1947 when the British Government expressed its inability to mediate the Arab-Jewish dispute and referred the Palestine problem to the U.N. In the meantime Soviet ability

to influence events in Palestine had considerably increased. The Jewish population had swollen on account of large scale immigration of East European Jews. The situation in Palestine was deteriorating fast since the Jews and Arab Palestinians were locked in incessant conflagration with the British. This offered a unique opportunity to U.S.S.R. to influence events by supporting Zionist aspirations for an independent Jewish state.

The Kremlin welcomed the submission of the Palestine Question to the U.N. Andrei Gromyko Deputy Foreign Minister declared on May 8, 1947, that the U.S.S.R. was prepared to take upon itself, together with the United Nations as a whole, the responsibility not only for the final decisions that may be taken by our organisation on the Palestine problem, but also for the preparation of the decision.

Nonetheless, given the traditional Soviet hostility towards Zionism, it came as a surprise when in the fall of 1947 Soviet spokesmen in the U.N. declared their support for the idea of partition and the creation of independent Jewish and Arab states in Palestine. Ideology was relegated to a second position while political expediency ruled the roost.

Moscow had the realization that Britain was firmly rooted in the Arab World that the Soviet Union would not be

able to gain any pro-Arab position. The Soviets had many other pragmatic considerations too. The Soviets were angry with the fact that Arab nationalist movements had taken a pro-axis orientation e.g. in Palestine it was led by the Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin Al-Husseini and in Egypt by Aziz Al-Masri. There is another argument advanced by some writers that Stalin approved of the partition of Palestine in a fit of absent-mindedness. Soviets also visualised that only the majority proposal, which was the partition of Palestine, had the chance of commanding the the necessary two third majority. This was therefore the only proposal that promised to bring the end of the British rule in Palestine.

The signal achievement of the Zionist diplomacy was the U.N. partition resolution of November 29, 1947. The Zionists for the first time in the history of their movement got an international sanction for the establishment of their own state. The origins of the November resolution lay in the UNSCOP, which at the end of August 1947 recommended British evacuation and termination of the Mandate.

The resolution for the partition was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 29 November 1947. At that date Jews made up 32 per cent of Palestine's population and owned 5.6 per cent of the land. The Zionist state were allotted 56 per cent of the territory, with the most fertile land.

The voting of this partition plan was the occasion of some sordid maneuvers on behalf of Zionism. On 18 December 1947 a member of the United States House of Representatives, Lawrence H. Smith, reminded Congress of what had gone on:

Let's take a look at the record, Mr Speaker, and see what happened in the United Nations' Assembly meeting prior to the vote on partition. A two third vote was required to pass the resolution. On two occasions the Assembly was to vote and twice it was postponed.... In the meantime it is reliably reported that intense pressure was applied to the delegates of three small nations by the United States member and also by officials at the highest level in Washington... The decisive votes for partition were cast by Haiti, Liberia and the Philippines. These votes were sufficient to make the two-thirds majority. Previously, these countries opposed the move.... The pressure by our delegates, by our officials and by the private citizens of the United States constitutes reprehensible conduct against them and against us.

President Truman put unprecedented pressure on the State Department. Sumner Welles, the Under-Secretary of state wrote, "By direct order of the White House, every form of pressure, direct and indirect, was brought to bear by American officials.... to make sure that the necessary majority would at length be secured". The Secretary for

Defence at that time James Forrestal, confirms this: "The methods that had been used by people outside of the Executive branch of the government to bring coercion and duress on other nations in the General Assembly bordered closely onto scandal".

In 1948, before the wave of "decolonization", the United Nations Organisation was largely dominated by the Western powers. It violated its own Charter by refusing to the Arabs, who at that time made up two-thirds of Palestine's population, the right to decide their own fate.

The partition Resolution also raised many juridical questions. The decision in favour of partition was taken by the General Assembly and not by the Security Council. It thus had the weight only of a recommendation and not that of a decision to be put into effect. The Palestinians, moreover, were not alone in rejecting this partition. Begin's Irgun declared at the time that such a partition was illegal and would never be accepted.

The U.N. partition plan did not survive the Arab-Israeli war it provoked. The borders of Israel, as determined by the cease-fire agreements of 1949, in their turn lasted little more than eighteen years and the search for a viable political settlement that still continues.



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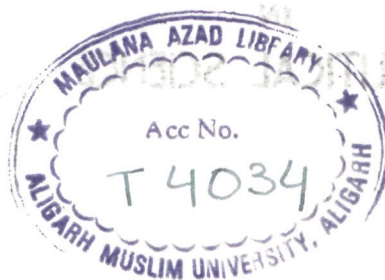
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PREFACE

In this thesis entitled "Zionism and the UN debates before the formation of Israel" an effort has been made to discuss and analyse the Zionist activities directed towards the formation of Israel. The focus is on the first half of the twentieth century. The Zionists had the network of their organizations and strategic contacts with the key figures in Great Britain, United States of America and the Soviet Union, the three powers which were directly concerned with the issue. They made concerted and well orchestrated effort in these countries to achieve their long-cherished goal i.e. the formation of Israel. These efforts of the Zionist paid rich dividends in promoting the cause of Israel in these countries and finally the United Nations General Assembly also. The culmination of all this was the Partition Resolution of 1947.

The thesis has been divided into six chapters. An outline summary of these chapters has been given below:

Chapter I which serves as an introduction to the thesis deals with the evolution of the Zionist ideology. It draws heavily from my M. Phil dissertation in Summary form and serves to place the present thesis in perspective. The chapter briefly discusses pre Herzlian Zionism, the

rise of Herzl and his book Der Judenstaat. The role of Basle Congress which was held in 1897 has also been briefly discussed.

Chapter II deals with the Zionism in practice. After all the Zionists were the people who inspired and activated other actors -- Great Britain, United States of America and the Soviet Union and ultimately through them the U.N. General Assembly. The evolution of post-Herzlian Zionist activities and their sophisticated diplomacy form the main part of this chapter.

Chapter III discusses the role of Great Britain which was the Mandatory power of Palestine from 1920 to 1948. Earlier it had issued the Balfour Declaration -- the seeds of the Israeli state. The British policy towards the Zionist goal has been discussed from World War I through the Mandatory period to the end of World War II. The British role culminated into her bringing the Palestinian Question on the agenda of the General Assembly in 1947.

Chapter IV deals with the U.S. policy towards Zionism, its support to the Zionist Organisations and finally the cause of Israel. The U.S. was a reluctant supporter of the

Zionist cause in the beginning. With the passage of time however, the Zionist efforts turned it into the main bulwark. It was the U.S. which through its might and diplomatic leverage gathered a preponderant majority (Two thirds) to vote for the partition of Palestine.

Chapter V discusses the role of the Soviet Union. It was strongly anti-Zionist but over the years specially after World War II, turned into a supporter of the idea of Israel. The Soviet role in the U.N. was crucial in the sense that without its support, the support of its Republics and the East European countries, the two third majority was impossible.

Chapter VI concentrates on the dynamics within the United Nations, and the specific role played by the "Jewish Agency", the Arab Higher Committee and the three major powers. The deliberations and debates resulting into the resolution on the partition of Palestine of 29 November 1947 have also been discussed in detail in this chapter.

It is hoped that this study will contribute, in its own modest way, to the understanding of Zionism and the role of the United Nations in creating the state of Israel.

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION: EVOLUTION OF THE ZIONIST IDEOLOGY

"The word 'Zionism' appeared at the end of the nineteenth century to designate a cluster of different movements, the common element of which was the project of giving world Jewry a spiritual, territorial or state centre, usually located in Palestine".¹ Naturally the Zionist idea took many forms particularly in its formative period, and it is not surprising that sometimes its strands negated each other.

Zionism has manifested itself in multiplicity of concepts, values, emotions, ideological assumptions, political strategies and tactics, closely interlinked with powerful networks of organisation. Like all fully grown national or nationalist movements, it contains complexities, contradictions and ambiguities, often making the very definition of Zionism puzzling.²

Anti - Zionist ideologists have themselves often used the term 'Zionism' in a loose way.³

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1. Maxim Rodinson, "Zionism: Theoretical Sketch of An Ideology" in Uri Davis, Andrew Mack, Nira Yuval Davis, (ed.), Israel and the Palestinians (London, 1975), p.57.
 2. Theodor Shanin, "The Price of Suspension", in Uri Davis, Andrew Mack, Nira Yuval Davis (ed.) Israel and the Palestinians (London, 1975), pp.24-5.
 3. Rodinson, n.1, p.57.

'Zionism' as a concept or ideology has been interpreted or understood from many angles. For some it is a 'permanent national calling of all Jewry'. Therefore it is justified and beneficial. For others it is subservient to universal values, and whether these values are taken from Judaism, liberal Humanism or from international proletarianism. For those who believe in universal human values and international proletarianism, Zionism is harmful and they consider it capitalism in its imperialist stage.⁴

The Western thinking and efforts lent a helping hand for the growth of Zionism. Two European developments in the second half of the nineteenth century created a congenial atmosphere for the imperialist-conceived Zionist idea'. The European Jewish mind was imbued with this Zionist idea and from a distance it seemed to be an 'inner motivated Jewish development'.⁵ The first was direct and indirect impact of the intellectual and political growth of European chauvinist nationalism. Nationalism had such an influence that even a socialist like Moses Hess titled his book 'Rome and Jerusalem' (1862). This book glorified Italian nationalist

4. Ibid.

5. Abdul Wahab Al Kayyali, "The historical Roots of the Imperialist Zionist alliance" in A.W. Kayalli (ed.), Zionism, Imperialism and Racism (London, 1979), p.13.

movement and played upon the theme of 'pseudoscientific racist' theories of the nineteenth century.⁶ Hess had warned the Jews to avoid assimilation and reassert their exclusivity by 'reconstructing' their national centre in Palestine'. Rome and Jerusalem is an important book but what is more of historical importance is the political and intellectual climate of Europe that produced it.⁷ "The real politick of European statesmen exercised tremendous influence and Bismark was virtually an inspiration to the intellectual and political founders of Zionism".⁸

The pogroms in Russia in 1881 were the second European development which provided impetus to the Zionist idea. On account of these pogroms there was a mass exodus of Jews to other countries of Eastern and Western Europe. This was a vital reason for the failure of Haskalah assimilationist movement. It was substituted by the movement of 'Lovers of Zion' which was inspired by Leo Pinsker's pamphlet, 'Auto Emancipation'. Societies were formed in Jewish centres to chalk out a programme for the settlement of Jews in Palestine and to revive the Hebrew language.⁹

6. Ibid., p.13.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., pp.13-14.

9. Ibid., p.14

The Jewish communities of capitalist Western Europe had already absorbed and accommodated themselves on account of the wave of emancipation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Jews had been since then enjoying, equality as citizens of Judaic religion. but the new migrants from the East posed new problems. "Differing in culture, language and habits, and in general perceived as alien, the migrants posed a threat of social disruption and revival of anti-Semitism".¹⁰ The West European governments became apprehensive of the influences of the radical East European Jews. Similarly the assimilated Jews of Western Europe got threatened of the migrants who might jeopardize their comfortable positions. However, the arrival of Eastern Jews did revive anti-Semitism.¹¹ A famous ultra-rich Jewish family of Rothchilds financed the Jewish settlements in Palestine to minimize Jewish immigration to Western Europe. Thus the feared rise of anti-Semitism was averted and the Jewry was aligned to the imperialist interests in the Middle East.¹²

 10. Davis, Mack & Davis, "Introduction" in Israel and the Palestinians (London, 1975), p.4.

11. Ibid., p.14.

12. Kayyali, n.5, p.14.

The Zionist effort in Palestine until now was the settlement of Jews for agricultural and religious purposes which was termed as 'Utopian Zionism'. It emphasized the need of agricultural settlements and at this stage its long term political aims were unclear.¹³ The Jewish Chronicle was established which later on became "an important vehicle for the popularization of Palestine colonization in Jewish circle".¹⁴

The Zionist mechanism can be summed in the following words:

The Hebrew conquest of land, labour and means of production were the three pillars of the Zionist effort. On this premise, and under the leadership of Labour Zionism an exclusively Jewish economy and polity were established. Physical labour in the fields and factories was the bedrock of Labour Zionism. The native Palestinian Arabs, who would, otherwise have been the undisputed inheritors of the British as rulers of the country, were thus confronted with the increasing political challenge of the nascent Jewish Yishu in Palestine.¹⁵

13. Davis, n.10, p.7.

14. A. Taylor, The Zionist mind (Beirut, 1974), p.32.

15. Davis, n.10, p.13.

Herzl

If it was in Eastern Europe that conditions were ripe for Zionist movement and it was the 'Pale of Settlement' that continuously provided the membership of the movement, it was only in the Western Europe that conditions were congenial for a strategic political concept of Jewish nationalism. The concept of political Zionism evolved in Vienna which was then considered to be the metropolis of the 19th century nationalist ferment.¹⁶ A young Jewish journalist from Vienna, Theodore Herzl, provided the political and organizational leadership of the new movement.¹⁷ "Into the frustrated and hopeless lives of the 'dreamers of the Ghetto' of Russia and Poland came the most fantastic of them all Dr. Theodor Herzl, who became the founder of all absorbing dynamic political Zionism as a result of his own experience with anti-Semitism".¹⁸

16. Noah Lucas, The Modern History of Israel (London 1974), p.28.

17. Kayyali, n.5, p.14.

18. Moshe Menuhin, The Decadence of Judaism In Our Time, (Beirut, 1969), p.31.

According to Carlyle Herzl was the "ablest, truest - hearted, justest, noblest man".¹⁹ Herzl was most important and chief dispenser of the Jewish political and social ideas. It has been rightly said that Zionism as a true political movement and as an international force was to all intents and purposes his intention and his creation.²⁰

Herzl had decided upon the idea of high politics (Hock politik) as an instrument to get his people a homeland. During his days in French parliament as a reporter he had learned much of the unethical art of European diplomacy practiced by the so-called statesman of that time. "As a journalist of high stature, he had every opportunity to learn about the prevalent international banditry, the games of colonialism, and the sanctimoniousness of the white man's burden."²¹

The Jews always had awaited the advent of Messiah. That Herzl tried to portray himself as a Messiah cannot be

19. Thomas Carlyle, The Hero, as King. On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History (London, 1962), VI, II, p.100.

20. David Vital, The Origins of Zionism (Oxford, 1975), pp.234-35.

21. Menuhin, n.18, p.36.

exactly proved. But there are numerous evidences that he was well-versed in messianic legend and conscious of the fact that among his followers there were a few who were simple and naive who saw in him an anointed deliverer. Herzl had become curious when he heard in 1895 about Shabbetai Zevi of the seventeenth century who is famous in Jewish history as the False Messiah. He never confirmed or rejected when people drew parallel with him and Shabbetai. He wrote in his diary. "The difference between myself and Shabbetai Zevi (The way I imagine him), apart from the difference in the technical means inherent in the times, is that I, however, find the great small, as small as myself".²² A year before his death he visited Russia and there he said, "Our People believe that I am the Messiah, I myself do not know this, for I am no theologian"²³ Herzl set out to translate the Messianic yearning of the Jews into territorial political claims.

Doing something for the Jews and to rescue them from their pathetic condition had always obsessed Herzl and he

22. Vital, n.20, p.244.

23. Herzl Year Book, vii (New York, 1971), p.26.

was very much aware of this fact that he was obsessed. However he always recognized this obsession as a source of strength.²⁴

This obsession limited Herzl's vision and he suffered from narrowness and egocentricity. Herzl was too close to Eastern Europe (Jews and Gentiles) to be able to take a universal, objective and historical approach to the Dreyfus Affair²⁵ and to the progressive advancing forces that fought against the forces of darkness he saw everywhere²⁶ Dr. Herzl was totally blind to the comprehensive, broad issues involved in the Dreyfus case.²⁷

France in 1894 was on its way towards the goal of democracy when the Dreyfus Affair occurred. Dreyfus was made

24. Vital, n.20, p.244.

25. It came to the knowledge of French General Staff in 1894 that some highly secret documents had been stolen from their files and these documents have been sold to their potential enemy i.e. the Germans. Alfred Dreyfus who was a French Jewish Officer was arrested and charged of espionage without any proof except for some questionable papers later proved to be false. It was later proved that these papers were concocted and the mischief was done by the Anti Semites.

26. Menuhin, n.18, p.36.

27. Ibid.

an scapegoat when the reactionaries temporarily gained an upper hand but, at last, they failed, when the democratic and liberal values gained in strength and fought back to regain the lost ground. Emile Zola, who was a French intellectual vindicated the name of Dreyfus while Jean Jaures exposed the forgeries. Another French man Clemenceau in 1912 proved that Dreyfus was innocent and curtailed the right of the Catholic Congregations and the separation of the Church and the state was effected. The issue involved in France was of democracy and it survived the storm against it. Emancipation had not failed rather it had worked 28

Menuhin wrote:

Herzl, the East European Jew, was unable to see that, any more than could the other 'dreamers of the ghetto' who were born and reared in the darkness of Russia and Poland and who could not divest themselves of their frustrations and unqualified prejudices against the Gentile world. And Hess, the German Jew (Germany of those days was hardly a democracy) after losing one battle quickly arrived at the conclusion that he had lost the war. 29

28. Ibid., p.37.

29. Ibid.

Before the Dreyfus Affair Herzl had thought of some other solution to the Jewish problem which was different from "Jewish political nationalism". In 1895, he wrote in his diary in Paris, "Two years ago I wanted to solve the Jewish question, at least in Austria, with the help of Catholic Church. I wished to arrange for an audience with the Pope and say to him 'Help us against anti-Semitism and I will lead a great movement for the free and honourable conversion of the Jews to Christianity". In broad daylight, at twelve o'clock a Sunday, the exchange of faith would take place in St. Stephen's Cathedral, with solemn parade and the peal of bell.³⁰

Socialism was another solution in Herzl's mind. When the Jews would become socialists there would emerge a movement which would fight the reactionary movements and anti-Semitism. Later in 1895 Herzl discarded those views. He wrote, "The thought grew stronger within me that I would have to do something for the Jews. Throughout the two thousand years of our dispersion, we have lacked unified political leadership I consider this our great misfortune. It has done us more harm than all the persecutions."³¹

30. Mervin Lowenthal, The Diaries of Theodor Herzl (Trans), (New York, 1956), p.56.

31. Ibid., p.38.

Herzl's Political Personality: Herzl, as a matter of fact, was not familiar with the Jewish Question before he set out to find an answer to it. He had not heard of 'Lovers of Zion' until he had formulated his own ideas and chalked out a plan for its execution. He came into contact with those Jews who had first hand knowledge of "Jewish social scene" only when he had come out to gather followers for his own plans".³² Herzl did not regret, for not reading Pinsker's Auto Emancipation earlier. He wrote, that if he had read it perhaps he would have abandoned his own undertaking.³³ He had not cared to go through Rome and Jerusalem until 1894. Only in May 1901 on a long train journey he finally read the book. He wrote, "Everything that we have tried is already in this book. The only bothersome thing is his Hegetian terminology. Wonderful the Spinozistic Jewish and national elements. Since Spinoza Jewry had brought forth no greater spirit than this forgotten, faded Moses Hess".³⁵ Herzl, according to Clemenceau, was a man of action.³⁶ "He

32. Vital n.20, p.247.

33. Ibid

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

distrusted subtlety, intricacy, verbal agility, compromise, demands for caution, concern for the views of others at the expense of one's own, and other such qualities that tend to obstruct rapid progress towards a stated goal."³⁷

He did not agree that antecedence in publication bestows any kind of privilege or authority. He noted in his diary, "This Birnbaum who had deserted Zionism for socialism three years before I appeared on the scene, poses obtrusively as my 'predecessor. In his brazen begging letters which he wrote me and others, he sets himself as the discoverer and founder of Zionism because he has written a pamphlet like many another since Pinsker (whom, after all, I had not read either)".³⁸

Herzl gave a definite shape to his plan during the spring of 1895 and the winter of that year, a span of nine months. This plan required a large amount of finance and that was the reason why he turned towards the "two pillars of Jewish enterprise and wealth". Baron de Hersch and the Rothschild family.³⁹

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid. p.248.

39. Ibid. p.248-49.

Herzl did meet Hersch. He tried to make him aware of the lack of Jewish political leadership and pointed out to him the problems of the Jewish people. The meeting with Hersch turned out to be a Fiasco. Herzl from now onwards did not consider him an ally.⁴⁰ He also wrote a letter to the head of the Vienna branch of Rothschild family, Baron Albert, when he was still in Paris. He wrote, " I shall come to the point without preliminaries. I have composed a memorandum about the Jewish question for the German Kaiser. If you would like to know what is in the document, I shall read it to you. If not, it will be quite sufficient for you to return this letter to me".⁴¹ Herzl waited for an answer and counted on July 4, "Albert R's reply, which was due today, has not come. Fortunately I did not degrade myself by excessive courtesy in my letter"⁴²

Herzl left Paris at the end of July. He by now had started suffering from inner tensions. He noted, "I am shunning all my acquaintances. They tread on my toes, having no idea of the world I come form; this makes daily living

40. Ibid., p.249.

41. Ibid., p.250.

42. Ibid.

terribly irritating"⁴³ The number of men with whom he found himself in tune even on the general issue of the condition of Jewry was tiny.

Herzl came across one notable person who some how or the other shared Herzl's views. He was Maz Nordan. Nordan was a physician and eleven years elder to Herzl. He had gained for himself immense literary reputation as an author of a number of volumes in which he had exposed the contemporary European society for its hypocrisies. When he read the address Nordan was enthralled. In a state of excitement he told Herzl, "If you are mad we are mad together: Count on me, I am with you!" Since then Nordan remained Herzl's most close associate.⁴⁴ Herzl, while discussing the Jewish question with Nordan, wrote in his diary, "Each took the words right out of the other's mouth. I never had such a strong feeling that we belonged together"⁴⁵ But Herzl kept his own counsel as far as the solution to the Jewish question was concerned. He even did not take Nordan into confidence.

43. Ibid., p.251.

44. Howard M. Sacher, A History of Israel (Oxford, 1977), p.37.

45. Vital, n.20. pp.252-54.

Herzl, in November 1895 took a brief journey to Paris, to London and again to Paris. This was for him decisive and vital. He was exposed to intelligentia of these advanced cities. In Paris he met Zodoc Kohen the chief Rabbi, three times. He read to him his 'address to the Rothschild where he had carefully eliminated all the references to the family. The chief Rabbi brought others to meet him. He was listened to attentively and impressed a number of important people. Zodoc Kohen suggested that Herzl should read his text to Edmond de Rothschild. Herzl remarked, "would n't dream of it".⁴⁶

Herzl met an important person in London. He was Zangwill. The latter was a well known name among the English Jewish intelligentia. His work Children of the Ghetto (182) had already made its literary reputation. He welcomed Herzl in England and arranged for him a series of meetings. Herzl met and discussed the Jewish question with important personalities like Asher Myers who was the editor, of Jewish Chronicle, Herman Alder, the Chief Rabbi Goldsmid and Sir Samuel Montague. The last was the banker and member of Parliament and was the most important contact of all. Herzl

46. Ibid., p.256.

was also introduced to the Maccabians by Zangwill. Maccabean was a Jewish society whose members were authors, artists and professional and those who did not indulge in commerce.⁴⁷

London proved to be very hospitable to Herzl. People listened to him politely and with interest. Montague, though did not commit himself to Herzl's plan, was sympathetic and friendly. Herzl won a friend in Goldsmid. The editor of the Jewish Chronicle asked for prepublication a summary of his pamphlet. Herzl had enough good reason to be pleased.⁴⁸

The Jewish Chronicle on January 17, 1896 published a resume, which titled "A Solution to the Jewish Problem". This was followed by an editorial comment. It wrote, "We hardly anticipate a great future for a scheme which is the outcome of despair"⁴⁹

Herzl found the only encouragement from some German students who came to invite him to a meeting of this

47. Ibid., pp.256-57.

48. Ibid., p.257.

49. Ibid., p.258.

society. They fired him with many questions like, 'A regular state? A real state with its own laws, inhabited, governed, and administered by Jews?'⁵⁰

Der Judenstaat

The fundamental concepts regarding Herzl's thought and Zionist outlook are in his *Der Judenstaat*.⁵¹ *Der Judenstaat* consists of 30,000 words. Its language is simple and appealing and the author seems to be intent on getting it read. The very first sentence of *Judenstaat* reads, "The idea which I have developed in this pamphlet is a very old one: It is the restoration of the Jewish state."⁵² *Der Judenstaat* does not appeal to pathos. He says, "I do not intend to arouse sympathetic emotions on our behalf. That would be foolish, futile and undignified proceeding".⁵³ He warned the Assimilationist Jews in these words, "Whoever would attempt to convert the Jew into a husband's man (i.e. Baron de Hersch) would be making an extra-ordinary mistake."⁵⁴

50. Erwin Rosenberger, Herzl, As I Remember Him, (New York, 1959), p.14.

51. Kayyali, n.5, p.16.

52. Walter Laquer, The Israeli Arab Reader (ed.) (Great Britain, 1970), p.22.

53. 'The Jewish State' document, 3; as quoted in Vital, n.20, p.260.

54. Ibid., p.260.

Herzl has made every effort to drive home the point that his pamphlet was down to earth, sensible and feasible plan. It was not an utopia. The misery of the Jews was the propelling force. The problem was always to show how it could be set in motion.⁵⁵

He said:

The (organised and self initiated) departure of the Jews will involve no economic disturbance, no crisis, no persecutions; in fact, the countries they abandon will revive to a new period of prosperity. There will be an inner migration of Christian citizens into the portions evacuated by Jews ... The Jews will leave as honoured friends; and if some of them returned, they will receive hands of civilized nations as is accorded to all foreign visitors.⁵⁶

Herzl traces the source of Jewish question to the bitter subjection and suppression of Jews in all countries where they lived. According to him the pressure on the Jews varied from place to place and from time to time but the -----

55. Ibid.

56. Salvie d' Avigdor, The Jewish State (trans), (1896), revised trans, Israel Cohen (1934) 'Introduction', as quoted by Vital n.20, p.261.

phenomenon was a general one. Among the Jews in economically upper classes it caused discomfort, in middle classes continual and grave anxieties, in our lower classes absolute despair. The nations in whose midst the Jews lived were all either covertly or openly optimistic Herzl was not interested in the causes of anti-Semitism. He dealt briefly with the rise of anti-Semitism and did not appear to sound very scientific. It's remote cause according to him was the loss of the power of assimilation of the Jews during the middle ages; it's immediate cause was excessive production of mediocre intellectuals who could not find a social and economic outlet downwards and upwards.⁵⁷

PLAN: Herzl says: "My plan is simple in design but complicated in execution". The plan consisted of two parts: Assumption of responsibility for Jewish national officers by a political body of to be called 'The Society of Jews'; and management of both the exodus of the Jews and their resettlement by a technical body to be called the Jewish Company.⁵⁸

57. The Jewish State, Chapter 2 as cited by Vital, n.20, p.262.

58. Kayyali, n.5, p.15.

The first was to contact the relevant governments and seek to obtain their consent for the attainment of Jewish sovereignty 'over a neutral piece of land, and then administer the territory as a provisional government. The second was to take form of a chartered company, established in London under English Law. The company would have to be provided with handsome working capital and would take care of the liquidation of the migrants property in their countries of origin. In exchange it would provide land, housing, and employment in the new country, . It was to promote industry and commerce. Herzl was to promote industry and commerce. Herzl has devoted longest chapter to this Jewish company in his *Der Judenstaat*.⁵⁹

He describes the plan of the migration of Jews in details, the method through which they will be provided with a new home "not by dragging them ruthlessly out of then sustaining soil, but rather by transplanting them carefully to better ground. The bright young and ambitious professionals will be allocated by the opportunities provided by the society, and the company and they will draw the others after them."⁶⁰

59. Vital, n.20, p.263.

60. The Jewish State, Chapter 3, as quoted by Vital, p.264.

Herzl in his *Der Judenstaat*, elaborated the functions of the 'Society of Jews' which happened to be the organ of the national movement. He emphasized the importance of the society that had to be created before all. The society would consist of active Jews who would be no secret members of it and would be endowed with the power of negotiation with other governments to foster its aim and objective.⁶¹ He wrote, "The Jewish people are at present prevented ... from conducting their political affairs themselves. Besides, they are in a condition of more or less severe distress in many parts of the world. They need, above all a gestor, This gestor cannot of course be a single individual. Such a one would either make himself ridiculous or seeing that he would appear to be working for his own interests contemptible. The gestor for the Jews must therefore be a corporate body, And that is the society of Jews".⁶²

It would not be sufficient for the Society to enter into negotiations with other governments but it would also work for the promotion of the study of the demography, economic resources, and public opinion of the Jews. The

61. Vital, n.20, p.264.

62. The Jewish State, Chapter 3, as quoted by Vital, p.265.

Society would form a nucleus around which the public institution of the Jewish state would later develop. Finally the Society would take up the issue where the Jews were to migrate. He discussed the question where the Jews were to migrate to "Shall we choose Palestine or Argentina? We shall take what is given us, and what is selected by Jewish public opinion. The Society will determine both these points."⁶³

Herzl had the clear cut idea what the Jews would have to give in return. He believed the Society of Jews, with the Jewish 'power of the purse' at its command would be able to grant financial advantages to the receiving - not in the form of a regular tribute but in the form of loans. He speculated, "Supposing his Majesty the Sultan were to give us Palestine we could in return undertake to regulate the whole finance of Turkey."⁶⁴ He was of the opinion that the entry of the Jews into their new country would 'divert streams of wealth' to the entire region, and precipitate 'an unprecedented commercial prosperity all around It was

63. Theodore Herzl, "On the founding of a Jewish Nation", in Justus Buchler and Sterning p. Lamprecht (ed.) in Religions of the World, (U.S.A. 1967), p.388.

64. Raphael Patai, (ed.), and Harry John((Trans) Diaries of Theodor Herzl, (New York and London, 1960), p.213.

his belief that all states would benefit, both those which the Jews would leave and those into whose neighborhood they would arrive.⁶⁵

Herzl had indeed pondered over Erez Israel as a most adequate land for Jews to settle. He mentioned, "It would have in its favour the facts that it is the unforgotten ancestral seat of our people, that its name would constitute a programme, and that it would powerfully attract the lower masses".⁶⁶ However, on the practical level Herzl never had a special choice though he had the realization that in Palestine modern Jews would find it difficult to settle as it was a country where modern economic technique could not be easily applied and that it was too close to Europe for his taste.⁶⁷

The subject of Erez Israel was delicate and he reconsidered his views, Putting aside his earlier reservations he wrote, "It is more and more to the interest of the civilized nations and of civilization in general that

65. Vital, n.20, p.265. See also Justus Buchler and Sterning Lamprecht, Religions of the World (U.S.A., 1967), p.367.

66. Kayyali, n.5, p.16.

67. Vital, n.20, p.266.

a cultural station be established on the shortest road to Asia. Palestine is this station and we Jews are the bearers of culture who are ready to give our property and our lives to bring about this creation."⁶⁸

It is not strange for the Zionists to call themselves the most cultured people. They were through their scheme arrogating to themselves the task of civilizing the world a further stage in the 'White mans burden'. It is surprising that Zionists were destroying Palestine and its people by establishing a Jewish state there, and yet they called it a civilizing mission. They stood the human values on their head and they showed the least sensitivity to the Palestinians. Herzl justified the choice of Palestine on the vague and spurious historical claim. He wrote, "Palestine is our over - memorable historic home. The very name of Palestine would attract our people with a force of marvelous potency."⁶⁹

68. Quoted in Jansen, Zionism, p.83, as quoted by Kayyali, n.5, p.16.

69. The Jewish State, Chapter-2, as quoted by Vital n.20, p.267. See also James W. Dye and W.H. Forthman (ed.) in Religious of the World, p.368.

The primary purpose of 'Der Judenstaat' was tactical to make the issue public and to draw new allies⁷⁰ After the publication of the pamphlet he wrote to colonel Goldsmid:

The essay I have published has gained me the greatest of hatreds and the warmest of friendships. The Zionists of Vienna and Berlin have proclaimed their enthusiasm for my plan. The money men praise and denounce me in the sharpest possible way. The anti Semites treat me fairly. At all events, the discussion is now open and, it seems, will soon reach the parliaments.⁷¹

The response of the important personalities and general non-Jewish public was cool towards Der Judenstaat. The subject received a very moderate response in the press. Herzl's own and most prominent newspaper in Vienna did not mention his pamphlet and his activities. The German and Austrian newspapers came out with unfriendly comments. The **Jewish Chronicle** ignored Herzl and supported Hersch, for Hersch confined his activities among Russian Jewry. It also felt that the absence of religious element in the scheme

70. Vital, n.20, p.267.

71. 27 February 1896, Igrot, II, n.44, p.66; as quoted by Vital, n.20, p.267.

"rendered it cold and uninviting". The chronicle rejected Herzl's theory that wherever Jews lived there was anti-Semitism. Baron de Hitsch did not react nor did the Rothschilds.⁷²

All in all, *Des Judenstaat* made few converts to his cause. Max Nordan on 26 February wrote to Herzl, "I have read your *Judenstaat* twice. This is only my impression very briefly: From an objective point of view the pamphlet can be discussed from several aspects. From a subjective point of view it is, simply great It was particular courage to have admitted to feelings that other Jews had pushed back into the depths of their unconscious. What will come of the pamphlet I do not know; but that you have revealed yourself in it, that I do know"⁷³

Basle Congress

"The idea of calling a general assembly of Zionists crops up in Herzl's correspondence and his diary almost

72. Jewish Chronicle, 24 April, 1896; as quoted by Vital n.20, p.269.

73. S. Schwartz (ed.), Max Nordau *Peigrotar*, (Jerusalem, 1944), app. V, n.2, p.295. As quoted by Vital, n.20, p.269.

immediately after his return to Vienna from his journey to the (evant and to London and Paris".⁷⁴ However he had no idea as to how he would translate this plan into action, nor had he the organisational detail. He was inclined to Zodoc Kahn's idea of a secret conference of eminent leaders. By the time the conference could be convened Herzl wanted to gain some diplomatic success to attract attention towards this meeting.⁷⁵ He wanted to involve masses and arouse public opinion and wanted to keep a public congress a weapon in reserve. This idea had taken a firm root in his mind and he started pondering over it concretely. However, Herzl moved patiently.

With the dashing of virtually all other expectations, and in a state of utter depression, the idea of a Congress set upon his mind in January 1897.⁷⁶ He had started referring to the Congress in his correspondence and in his diary in a definite way at the same time. He wrote to De Hass his chief contact in England, "I intended to call a

74. Letter from Wolffshn to Herzl, 10 August, 1896, C.Z.A., II, VIII, 940/5; as quoted by Vital, n.20, p.328.

75. Diaries 11, p.447; as quoted by Vital, n.20, p.328.

76. Letters from Herzl to Stand: 18 November 1896, Igrot, II, n.160, pp.171-2; as cited by Vital, n.20, p.328.

general assembly of Zionists in Switzerland this summer and started giving the matter a moderate preliminary publicity".⁷⁷

On March 7, 1897, a decision to convene a Zionist Congress was taken during a two-day conference of a group of Lovers of Zion from Berlin. Herzl was there with his associates from Austria to chalk out a plan for a cooperative working relationship with the Berlin circle. Willy Bambus was the leader of this Berlin circle. he was a leading personality of 'Esra' a society founded to facilitate and encourage the settlement of the Russian Jews in Erez-Israel.⁷⁸

The decision to call the Congress was a historic decision. It was not a difficult task set by Herzl to his friends which could not be attained. It was a task for which Herzl himself was best suited. He was gifted by the art of persuasiveness, sense of theatre and experience of the workings of the French parliament. He was from the very

77. Letters from Herzl to Stand: 18 February 1897, Igrot, II, n.193, p.205; Diaries, II, p.517; as cited by Vital, n.20, p.329.

78. Ibid., n.20, p.329.

beginning quite clear about his aims. The Congress had to "be a glorious demonstration to the world of what Zionism is and of what it wants". Apart from that, its immediate business was to make a unified Zionist movement possible.⁷⁹

Herzl never again looked upon those like Edmond de Rothschild who earlier had paid no heed to his ideas. The Congress had to be a manifestation of public rebellion against the well-established secular leadership of Jewry. Herzl did try to win over those like Goldsmid who were on the margin of opposition to him. The western Jews in majority responded to the proposal of the Congress outrageously though the Austro-Hungarian Zionists convention endorsed the proposal for convening an international congress.⁸⁰

There followed a mixed reaction. German newspapers came out with editorials condemning the proposed Zionist Congress as antinational and against the basic tenets of Judaism.⁸¹ The B'nai Brith Lodge of Munich called upon the Jews not to extend any cooperation to Herzl. A letter issued

79. Letters from Herzl to Bentwich, 9 March 1897, Igrot, II, n.199, p.212; as cited by Vital n.20, pp.332-33.

80. Sacher, n.44, p.44.

81. Ibid.

by the executive committee of the association of German Rabbis expressed its sentiment against Zionism as follows:

The Association of Rabbis in Germany regards it as proper to make the following explanations:

1. The efforts of so-called Zionists to found a Jewish national state in Palestine contradict the messianic promises of Judaism as contained in the Holy Writ and in later religious sources.

2. Judaism obligates its adherents to serve with all devotion the fatherland to which they belong, and to further its national interests with all their strength..... Religion and patriotism both lay upon us the duty of asking all who are concerned with the welfare of Judaism to stay away from the above mentioned Zionists endeavors and most particularly from the Congress which is still being planned, despite all the warning against it.⁸²

But the correspondent of **Ha-Magid** wrote, "If the assembly were to bring some unity to the movement then surely it was to be welcomed".⁸³ The newspaper **Ha-Zefira** wrote, Nothing comparable had been attempted since the

82. Ibid.

83. **Ha-Magid**, 21 April 1897; as quoted by Vital, n.20, p.341.

movement had begun and we were entitled to see it as a good augury, the beginning of redemption for at last the many needs of our people have assumed a concrete form.... and the Jewish question on which all had trodden will now be discussed in public by the wise and the eminent".⁸⁴

There were also private reactions which were mixed in nature. A few of the veterans became quick convert to the idea. Lillienblum felt about-Herzl to be a man who wanted to involve Western Jewry in the re-establishment of Yishuv in Erez Israel. He wondered, "could such a one be turned down"⁸⁵ Ahad-Ha'am did not oppose the Congress but was not optimistic about it and could see little coming out of it.⁸⁶

But nothing deterred Herzl to forge ahead. Herzl refused to compromise over the nature of the Congress. The site of the Congress was fixed at Basle in Switzerland. It was the only compromise Herzl was ready to make.⁸⁷ The Jewish Chronicle had called the whole affair Dr. Herzl's Congress,⁸⁸

84. Ha-Zefira, 5 May 1897, as quoted by Vital n.20, p.341.

85. Vital, n.20, pp.341-42.

86. Ibid., p.347.

87. Sacher, n.44, p.44.

88. Vital, n.20, p.344.

The first Zionist Congress held at Basle was an unprecedented event. An air of uncertainty was lurking among the delegates. The arrangement was perfect and well thought out and Herzl was determined to leave a strong and lasting impression. The agenda was provided before hand and the participants were provided with a badge bearing the inscription. 'The establishment of a Jewish state is the only possible solution to the Jewish Question.'⁸⁹

The Congress opened on Sunday morning, 29 August 1897, in the Concert Hall of the Basle Cassino. Herzl had insisted on the delegates attending the opening session to wear formal dress, tails and white ties. A modern Zionist flag was hanging at the building entrance.⁹⁰

The Congress at Basle was attended by 200 to 250 people representing twenty four states and territories. The participants were an assembly of educated, middle class Jews: businessmen, industrialists, financiers, men of letters, members of professions and students. There were also eleven Rabbis. Overwhelmingly they were liberal and modernist in their social and religious tendencies. Very few

89. Ibid., p.354.

90. Ibid., p.354.

of the participants were men of repute outside the Jewry. Only Nordan had an international reputation. The veterans from Russia and Poland - Mandelstamm, Ahad Ha'am, Sokolov, Ussekhin - were decidedly among the most powerful and interesting personalities present.⁹¹

It was Herzl and Nordan who delivered the two key speeches the one made a brief restatement of the rationale, purposes and method of political Zionism, and the other gave an analysis of its sources in the contemporary social conditions of the Jews.⁹²

When Herzl rose to speak he was greeted by a thunderous ovation. Ben Ami, one of the Russian delegates remarked; Hail to the king' It was an appellation Herzl would not have disdained.⁹³

Herzl said, "We are here to lay the foundation stone of the house which is to shelter the Jewish nation", He added, "Anti Semitism has given us our strength again. We have returned home Zionism is the return of the Jews to Judaism even before their return to the Jewish land. "He

91. Ibid., p.358-59.

92. Ibid., p.360.

93. Sacher, n.44, p.45.

explained that the Congress would take up the task and take recourse to "the spiritual means of revising and nursing the Jewish national consciousness". He pointed out the inadequacy of the piecemeal colonization in Palestine which did not have the international legal sanction Herzl's address was impressive, temperate and restrained.⁹⁴ Nordan spoke about the sad conditions of East European Jewry. He also analysed the failure of emancipation and the dilemma of Western European Jewry in social and political affairs. He described the West European Jews as the race of new Marranos. Nordau declared, "It is a great sin to let a race whose abilities even its worst enemies do not deny, degenerate in intellectual and physical misery The misery of the Jews cries out for help. The finding of that help will be the great task of this Congress."⁹⁵

The Congress continued for three days and after that it constituted for itself a number of organisations to promote its aims and objectives. A permanent Zionist organisation of the Jewish Society on the lines of Herzl's essay was constituted. There had to be a General Council which would

94. Ibid.

95. Ibid.

perform the function of the Executive of the Zionist organisation and would be known as 'Greater Action Committee'. It would comprise of representatives of the numerous national Zionists' federations; and a Central Executive (a "Smaller Actions Committee") whose members all lived in Vienna. Those who agreed with the Basle programme could become members by paying the annual fee of a 'Sheket', an ancient Hebrew coin which was equivalent to a single Austrian Schilling. Herzl was the unanimous for the President of the Zionist Organisation. The discussion finally ended with the singing of a Hebrew anthem "Ha Tikvah" (The Hope), written by Nephtali Imber, and a vote of thanks to Herzl. Herzl wrote afterwards, 'If I were to sum up the Basle Congress in a single phrase which I would not dare to make public, I would say in Basle 'I created the Jewish state' ".⁹⁶

The key provision of the Congress stated, "The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law"⁹⁷ A reading of Herzl's

96. Ibid.

97. Sokolov, 268; as quoted by W.T. Mallison, Jr., "Claims to Constitute the Jewish People" in J.N. Moore (ed.) The Arab Israeli Conflict (New Jersey, 1974), Vol.I, pp.101-2.

Diaries as well as an examination of subsequent Zionists' action would reveal that the term "public law" refers nothing but to the patronage of the imperialist powers..... He envisaged that the European powers would back Zionism for one of the three main motives:

1. Imperialist self interest;
2. Ridding themselves of Jews and antisemitism (in west European case avoiding the influx of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe) and
3. Using organised Jewish influence to combat revolutionary movements and other internal factors.⁹⁸

Four means were adopted to obtain this objective:

(i) The programmatic encouragement of the settlement of Palestine with Jewish agricultural workers, laborers and artisans.

(ii) The unification and organisation of all Jewry into local and general groups in accordance with the laws of respective country.

(iii) The strengthening of Jewish self awareness and national consciousness.

98. Kayyali, n.5, p.17.

(iv) The preparation of activity for obtaining the consent of the various governments, necessary for the fulfillment of the aims of Zionism.

These means were the same as Herzl had formulated in his pamphlet *Der Judenstaat*. The only change occurred when the word "Home" was substituted for the word "state". The change in terminology was a conscious attempt to appeal to those Jews who had a sentimental cultural or religious attachment to Palestine. These were the Jews who had been opposing the concept of Jewish nationality or Jewish state.⁹⁹ Herzl was convinced that his supporters will not find it difficult in meaning it "Jewish State" in any case.¹⁰⁰

"This calculated ambivalence concerning a central element of the Zionist political programme aided Herzl in obtaining support for Zionism. Succeeding Zionist leaders have consistently used this technique of calculated ambiguity in terminology in order to enhance Zionist appeal among those opposed to Zionist nationality concept".¹⁰¹

99. Alan R. Taylor, Prelude to Israel: An Analysis of Zionist Diplomacy 1897-1947 (Beirut, 1959), p.5.

100. Ibid., p.6.

101. W.T. Mallison, n.97, p.102.

The first president of the Zionist Congress Theodor Herzl started translating the programmes of Basle Congress into action First of all he met with Kaiser Wilhelm II, who was on a tour of Ottoman Empire. Herzl discussed with him the opening of a land development company under the protection of Germany operated by Zionists in Palestine. At first the Kaiser showed some inclination in favour of the proposal but rejected it in the second meeting.¹⁰²

Herzl managed to approach directly to the Sultan of Turkey. He put forward in May 1901 his proposal of Zionist immigration to Palestine and in return he promised that the Zionists would take care of the financial problems of Turkey.¹⁰³ The Sultan, however, did not agree to this idea of mass immigration to Palestine.¹⁰⁴

The Zionist executive body then turned towards Great Britain in October 1902 to seek from them a chunk of Sinai Peninsula for immigration and settlement.¹⁰⁵ During the interview with Chamberlain in October 1902, Herzl's voice

102. Tayler, n.99, p.7.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid., pp.7-8.

trembled as he explained his proposal for an Anglo-Zionist partnership which involved colonial concessions for the Jews in Cyprus, el-Arish and the Sinai Peninsula to serve as a "rallying point for the Jewish people in the vicinity of Palestine"¹⁰⁶ Herzl tried to convince Chamberlain and Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, that by supporting the Zionist attempts the British Empire would gain not only a rich colony but also ten million Jews.¹⁰⁷ He wrote:

Will all wear England in their hearts if through such a deed it becomes the protective power of the Jewish people. At one stroke England will get ten million secret but loyal subjects active in all walks of life all over the world. At a signal, all of them will place themselves at the service of the magnanimous nation that brings long desired help England will get ten million agents for her greatness and her influence. And effect of this sort of thing usually spreads from the political to the economic.¹⁰⁸

106. Patai (ed.), Diaries, p.1362; as quoted by Kayyali, n.5, p.18.

107. Ibid.

108. Ibid.

The above collusion between Zionism and imperialism was too clear to be commented on. An Arab writer said, "Herein lies the Zionist *quid pro quo*: for the power that undertakes to be universal protector they offer the Jews as universal agents and the Jewish settler state as a client".¹⁰⁹

Negotiations broke down, but in 1903 the British government offered the Zionist organisation the opportunity to colonize a portion of Uganda.

Herzl somehow reconciled to Uganda offer but no concrete action was taken upon it. The plan was abandoned after Herzl's death in 1904.¹¹⁰

In view of the subsequent Zionist emphasis upon Palestine the Uganda proposal may appear to be surprising. It is significant as an indication of the secular and political character of the Zionist movement. The search for the territory elsewhere when the Palestine objective was frustrated reveals the lack of strong cultural and religious ties to Palestine. Only at a later stage, did the emotional

¹⁰⁹. Ibid.

¹¹⁰. Taylor, n.99, p.8.

attachment of the Zionist movement to Palestine became so great that no other territory would be considered.¹¹¹

As far as public international law was concerned Zionism did not gain any recognition at the beginning of the world War I. The Zionist Organisation was working and had entered into negotiations with many governments. However, the mere conduct of such negotiations gave some recognition to the Zionist Organisation as an international public body. "Nevertheless, the negotiations brought no practical political results for either the Organisation or its claimed national entity, "The Jewish people"¹¹²

The great conception of Herzl, the gigantic enthusiasm of the Basle Congress and the untiring efforts of the founder of political Zionism appeared to have fizzled out by the beginning of the World War I. It appears that if the War had not taken place with all its schemes on the part of the Allied Powers, and the situations created during and after the War, political Zionism would have died. The War, the intensified imperialist drive in West Asia and the winning

111. Ibid., n.97, p.103.

112. Ibid.

over of the West European Jews and many others, who were reluctant at the beginning, brought a new batch of East European Jewish leaders, less imaginative but more pragmatist than Herzl, to the forefront. They furthered the idea of Herzl and through a long, concerted and internationally orchestrated propaganda and effort, ultimately got Israel, which appeared to be an impossible and fantastic proposition at the beginning.

CHAPTER-II

THE ZIONIST GOALS AND ACTIVITIES AFTER HERZL

Zionism split into two factions after the death of Herzl in 1904. One supported Herzl's view that the main problem was that of international sanction and the achievement of an immediate solution to the Jewish Question. The solution of the problem either lay in Palestine or somewhere else. This group came to be known as that of the 'Politicals'. The other faction, strongly influenced by the cultural revivalism of the 'Lovers of Zion Societies', rejected the idea of the building of a Jewish home or a nation in any place other than Palestine. These people were referred to as the 'practicals'. The practicals demonstrated greater show of strength at the seventh Zionist Congress in 1905. A resolution was adopted in which it was declared that Zionism was concerned solely with Palestine.¹ The titles attached to these two groups were of the time of Uganda proposal but they are misleading. Both the factions drew their strength from political Zionism. The only difference was , while one emphasized legalization the other stressed colonization of Palestine, and this was historical cultural romanticism. Eventually, the two trends political realism and romantic nationalism were to merge and form one

1. Fanny Fern Andrews, The Holy Land Under Mandate (Cambridge, 1931), 1, p.316.

platform. Later, the third element of the programme, i.e. the rallying of world Jewry to the cause, was to become a major Zionist concern in view of the fact that in 1914 only 13,000 of the 13,000,000 million Jews in the world were Zionists.²

Consequently Herzl's three point programme, namely, (1) the promotion of an organized, large-scale Jewish colonization of Palestine, (2) the acquisition of an internationally recognized legal right to colonize Palestine, and (3) the formation of a permanent organization to unite all Jews in the cause of Zionism,³ held together. From 1905 to 1914, colonization of Palestine continued gradually and, at the outbreak of World War I, fifty nine Jewish colonies with some 12,000 inhabitants existed in Palestine.⁴ There was also a group of Jews who attached greater importance to political recognition. These Jews moved to England in search of sympathetic support.⁵

2. Joseph M.N. Jeffries, Palestine: the Reality (London, 1939), p.38.

3. The ESCO Foundation for Palestine, Palestine, a Study of Jewish, Arab and British Policies (New Haven, 1947), 1, p.40.

4. Andrews, n.1, p.321.

5. Chaim Weizmann, Trial and Error (New York, 1949), p.93.

Zionist Diplomacy and World War I:

Herzl had regarded England as a potential ally of Zionism. After Herzl's death, the interest of Zionists in England increased over the decade.⁶ This interest intensified. The Zionists were quick to perceive that England could be helpful in what had been till now a futile search for unlimited immigration into Palestine and that the establishment of a recognized and legalized Zionist political status could now be successful. Immediately, England became the uppermost concern of the Zionist organization.

Chaim Weizmann was a Russian Jew and Chemist by profession. He moved to England in 1904. He was destined to become the new leader of the Zionist movement. Weizmann had the conviction that British were the most promising potential sympathizers of Zionism. He, in 1905, initiated a diplomatic offensive for establishing a rapport with British politicians. He met Arthur Balfour⁷ and later Balfour recalled Weizmann, as "the man who made me a Zionist".⁸

6. Nahum Sokolow, History of Zionism, 1600-1918 (London, 1919), 1, p.44.

7. Christopher Sykes, Two Studies in Virtue (New York, 1953), pp.165.

8. Meyer W. Wesgal (ed.), Chaim Weizmann, Statesman, Scientist, and Builder of the Jewish Commonwealth (New York, 1944), p.131.

Weizmann, initially a member of the 'practical' faction of the Zionist Organization was the chief dispenser of fusion of the factions within political Zionism.⁹ The deadlock between the 'politicals' and the 'practicals' had been broken at the Eighth Congress in 1907,¹⁰ and, with the advent of the World War I, Weizmann's 'organic' Zionism became predominant. The three point programme of Herzl i.e. organization, recognition and colonization, gained in prominence, and the 'synthesis', as it is sometimes called, was symbolized in the person of Dr. Weizmann. Weizmann had a developed sense of the importance of Gentile support of this time when it was so vital to Zionism to win such support. Weizmann already in 1907 had shown his awareness of the importance of Gentile recognition of Zionism, "political Zionism means: to make the Jewish question an international one. It means going to the nations and saying to them. 'We need your help to achieve our aim...'"¹¹

Once the decision was taken to concentrate Zionist activity on winning England as Zionism's ally, Weizmann was

9. Weizmann, n.5, pp.121-122.

10. Ibid., p.122.

11. Weisgal, n.8, p.92.

joined by two of the leading Zionists on the continent - Sokolow and Tselenow.¹² Two important directions were envisaged in Zionist plan: (1) the winning of British Jews to Zionism, a task which Weizmann had begun just before the war by interesting the Rothschilds in a project to found a university in Palestine,¹³ (2) winning over of friends for Zionism among the top leaders in the British Government.

Weizmann started cultivating new contacts though he had already met Balfour in 1914 which was of little consequence, since Balfour was not a cabinet member. There was a chance meeting in 1914 between Weizmann and C.P. Scott, then editor of the Manchester Guardian. Weizmann immediately won Scott to the cause of Zionism and Scott introduced Weizmann, Sokolow and Tschlenow to Llyod George and Herbert Samuel, both members of the cabinet.¹⁴ Llyod George and Samuel, the latter a Jew himself, showed sympathy and thus began a period of Zionist diplomatic preparation designed to muster British support.

12. Alan R. Taylor, Prelude to Israel, An Analysis of Zionist Diplomacy 1897-1947, (London, 1961), p.10.

13. Sokolow, n.6, 11, p.48.

14. Jeffries, n.2, p.92.

The conversion of Balfour and Scott to the Zionist cause exemplifies the phenomenon of Gentile Zionism. Arnold Toynbee offers two explanations. First, he suggests that the pro Zionist inclinations of some Gentiles may be derived from a sense of guilt arising out of a subconscious anti-Semitism.¹⁵ He also attributes Gentile Zionism in Anglo-Saxon countries to a characteristically "Anglo Saxon" attitude of combining an unavowed yet patent Machiavellianism with a suspect yet sincere Quixortry...¹⁶ Christopher Sykes offers Christian millenarianism as an explanation of Gentile Zionism in England.¹⁷

Certainly many christians supported Zionism because they felt that Biblical prophesy foretells the restoration of the Jew to Palestine.

Thus, if christians have supported Zionism on religious grounds, what is most surprising is that they have enquired into the biblical justification for Zionism with so uncritical and so unsearching an eye.¹⁸

15. Arnold J. Toynbee, A Study of History (London, 1954), VIII, p.308.

16. Ibid., VIII, 308, footnote. As cited by Taylor, n.12, p.11.

17. Sykes, n.7, pp.149-152.

18. Taylor, n.12, p.11.

It may be further explained that the willingness of the Gentile to go out of their way to assist Zionism arises out of a confusion in their minds as to the relationship between Zionism and liberalism. Many Gentiles have supported Zionism with the conviction that they are serving the cause of racial tolerance by so doing. As a matter of fact, it has the assimilationist Jews who sought a liberal solution to racism, while the Zionists sought a national solution. Yet the confusion in the minds of Gentiles has existed, and this served partially to explain their pro-Zionist leanings.¹⁹

In November 1914, just one month before his meeting with Samuel and Lloyd George, Dr. Weizmann outlined the Zionist position to be laid before the British Government. This contained in a letter to Scott, which read:

...we can reasonably say that should Palestine fall within the British sphere of influence, and should Britain encourage Jewish settlement there, as a British dependency, we could have in twenty to thirty years a million Jews out there, perhaps more; they would develop the country, bring back civilization to it and form a very effective guard to the Suez Canal.²⁰

19. Ibid., p.11-12.

20. Weizmann, n.5, p.149.

This idea of Weizmann developed into Zionism's war policy. Its aims were' (1) an Allied victory (2) the establishment of a British mandate in Palestine (3) an understanding that such a British mandate would then facilitate the entry of a million or more Jews into Palestine within a period of twenty to thirty years after the mandate was established, and (4) an understanding that the mandate would terminate in a Jewish controlled Palestine which could continue to serve Britain's interest in the Suez Canal by acting as a bulwark for the defence of that waterway. It is interesting to note that all four points have been fulfilled.²¹

Lloyd George and Herbert Samuel started lending a helping hand to Weizmann in order to enlist the support of the British government. Herbert Samuel who was pro Zionist before his meeting with Weizmann presented the subject of the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine to Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary.²² Grey agreed to work to fulfill such a task and joined the ranks of pro-zionists in the British Government.

21. Taylor, no.12, p.12.

22. The ESCO Foundation, no.3, 1, p.81.

Now the stage was set when the pro-Zionist case was put forward for the British Cabinet support. The then Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith was committed to a policy of replacing the Turks with the Arabs as friends of Great Britain in the Near East.²³ The leaders of assimilated British Jewry became active in opposing the idea of the establishment of a Jewish home as an answer to the Jewish Question. They were of the opinion that the national postulate of Zionism would only promote anti-Semitism and that they could not open discussions with a Zionist Organization which contained members in enemy countries.²⁴ Consequently the Zionists embarked upon an extensive propaganda campaign. This was aimed at to muster supporters among British Jews and non-Jews, and to create the impression that the majority of world Jewry backed the Zionist cause. Herbert Sidebotham, a prominent English journalist associated with the Manchester Guardian and a pro-Zionist organised the British Palestine Committee to spread Zionist ideas throughout the United Kingdom.²⁵

 23. Jeffries, n.2, p.93.

24. Ibid., p.95.

25. Ibid., p.98.

Sidebotham was interested in Zionism from the British strategic point of view.²⁶

Dr. Weizmann stationed himself in London. It was here that he could be in close contact with government officials. In his first meeting with Lloyd George, Chairman of the War Munitions Committee, Weizmann had learned that the British Government was in need of a method to produce acetone for explosives in large quantities.²⁷ During 1915, Weizmann developed such a method and informed Scott of his success. Scott made several trips to London to persuade Llyod George, Balfour and others to make use of Weizmann.²⁸ Finally Weizmann accompanied Scott to see Llyod George, and, in February 1916, Weizmann was appointed to the admiralty under the supervision of Balfour.²⁹ Weizmann deliberately avoided the question of Zionism, but Balfour told Weizmann one day, you know after the war you may get your Jerusalem.³⁰

26. Weizmann, n.5, p.162.

27. Israël Cohen, A Short History of Zionism (London, 1953), pp.70-71.

28. Jeffries, n.2, p.98.

29. Ibid., p.99.

30. Ibid.

In the autumn of 1915, Mark Sykes had been appointed as Assistant Secretary to the War Cabinet. There were only two such positions, and the fact that Sykes was given charge primarily of Near Eastern officers made him a very important person in the eyes of Zionist recruiters. Some time before 1914, a British Zionist named Moses Gaster had exposed Sykes to the principles of Zionism and, according to Sykes himself, it was Gaster who converted him to the cause shortly after his appointment to the service of the War Cabinet.³¹

Sykes, on October 19, was approached by a pro-Zionist Armenian, one James Malcolm, probably, though not certainly, at the instigation of the Zionist Organisation. Malcolm succeeded in reviving Sykes sympathy for Zionism, stressing the fact that Justice Brandeis, a prominent American Zionist, had a special influence with President Wilson and could serve to help bring the United States into the War.³² Sykes heeded to this argument and petitioned the Cabinet on several occasion to enter direct negotiations with the Zionists. This the Cabinet finally agreed to do, but without

31. Sykes, n.7, p.176.

32. Ibid, pp.181-183.

any previous commitments. Malcolm was appointed as the go-between, and the Zionists prepared themselves for action in the face of this climactic success.

The Zionists first request was granted i.e. they could use British communication facilities to contact Zionists throughout the world. This particular grant of Zionist request established a precedent of cooperation with the Zionists and making it impossible to reverse this policy, owing to the fact that the communications facilities were used to proclaim British support of Zionism throughout World Jewry.³³ To reverse this support would have resulted in incurring the wrath of Zionist Jews the world over.

At this juncture of Zionist efforts and maneuverings a Zionist proposal was drawn up as the basis of negotiations with the British government. The document called "Programme for a New Administration of Palestine in Accordance with the Aspirations of the Zionist Movement"³⁴ was put before the British Government. It contained the proposal of the establishment of a semi-governmental Jewish company in

33. Ibid., pp.187-188.

34. The ESCO Foundation, n.3, 1, pp.87-9.

Palestine under the suzerainty of Britain or France. The company was to have a national status and be allowed to encourage Jewish colonization of Palestine. The Zionist case rested on this proposal until December 1916, when Lloyd George replaced Asquith as Prime Minister and became leader of the Second Coalition Government. Lloyd George, as has been noted, had already been recruited to the Zionist cause, and thus the battle was really over. With the Prime Minister in the Zionist camp, and the appointment of Balfour, another pro-Zionist, to the headship of the Foreign Office, a British commitment to Zionism was assured.³⁵

The Balfour Declaration:

Mark Sykes in February 1917, after the formation of the second coalition government of Britain, was designated to represent the government to enter into negotiations with the Zionists. The first meeting³⁶ took place at the home of Moses Gaster who was instrumental in influencing Sykes in favour of Zionism. Gaster stated that the fulfilment of Zionist aim depended on England and could be realized through British suzerainty alone. This reassured the British

35. Taylor, n.12, p.18.

36. The ESCO Foundation, n.3, 1, pp.90-94.

Government that U.K's strategic interest in Palestine would receive consideration as an integral part of any compromise reached between itself and the Zionist organisation. Whatever the British government was doing or intended to do in preparation of a deal with the Zionists, the Zionists were providing a sense of justifications for them.³⁷

Herbert Samuel expressed the hope that complete national status would be given to the Jews of Palestine and that the Jews living in Diaspora would share this national status. The sharing of national status of the Jews of Diaspora was a suggestion which expected them to strive for dual nationality. The concept of the obligations of a citizen to this national state seems to have escaped Samuel completely.³⁸

Weizmann spoke next and laid emphasis on the premise that the Mandatory power of Palestine should direct the administration that nothing should be done which would restrict the Jewish immigration in any manner.³⁹

37. George Antonius, The Arab Awakening. The Story of the Arab National Movement (London, 1945).

38. Taylor, n.12, p.18.

39. Ibid.

At the end of the meeting the Zionists summarised their basic requirements:⁴⁰ (1) an international recognized right of the Jews to Palestine, (2) the establishment of juridical nationhood for the Jewish community in Palestine, (3) a chartered Jewish company to be created in Palestine under one administration and (4) the establishment of extra-territoriality in the holy places of Palestine. The first three of these points embody the Zionist aims, while the latter two were designed to placate Great Britain and Russia, respectively.⁴¹

The proposal was articulated to muster favour of in England and Russia and new efforts had to be directed towards France and the Arabs who were interested but uncommitted partners. Palestine was predominantly Arab, but the Zionists had never given cognizance to this vital Arab factor. And in many Congresses held since 1897⁴² did not even mention them. Zionists; prime concern was to bring France in their favour. They gave secondary consideration to friendly overtures turns to the United States and Italy.⁴³

40. The ESCO Foundation, n.3, 1, 92-93.

41. Ibid.

42. Jeffries, n.2, p.40.

43. Taylor, n.12, p.19.

Mark Sykes was the first person to foresee the importance to the Zionists of obtaining French approval. Sykes, on 8 February 1917 directed Sokolav to meet M. Georges Picot at the French Embassy in London.⁴⁴ Sokolow put the Zionist point across and was successful in winning Georges Picot to the Zionist point of view that mandate for Palestine should be given to England now the official support of the French government was required. The French government at that time was under the influence of a group known as 'Syrian Party' which wanted French mandate over whole of Syria Sokolow had to play the same game what the Zionist played in England to win the support of this particular Syrian Party and influence the French government. Sokolow started for France in March 1917. He in his mission, was joined by Sykes, who put Sokolow in touch with the proper French authorities. He also used his connections to investigate the thinking of the 'Syrian Party' and to facilitate Sokolows mission.⁴⁵

Sokolow got busy in influencing the French government while Sykes left for Italy to prepare ground for a

44. Sykes, n.7, p.196.

45. Ibid., pp.198-99.

favourable reception of Sokolow in the Italian Government and at the Vatican.⁴⁶ Thus, stage was set for Sokolow and when he arrived in Italy he was greeted with open arms, though Sokolow found it difficult to dispel Pope's concern for the fate of the non-Jewish communities in Palestine.⁴⁷

The French government, through an official letter delivered by Jules Camlon, Secretary General to the French Foreign Ministry⁴⁸ to Sykes on his return to Paris expressed the sympathy for the Zionist cause. The mission of Sokolow was accomplished. The transfer of the support of the French government from the 'Syrian Party' to the Zionists was due not only to the work of Sykes, but also to the influence of Baron Edmond de Rothschild.⁴⁹ 'At the crucial moment this convert of Weizmann talked the anti-Zionist Alliance Israelite Universelle into backing in the Zionist cause before the French Government thus providing the needed extra weight to carry the day for Sokolow'.⁵⁰

46. Ibid., pp.200-01.

47. Ibid.

48. Taylor, n.12, p.20.

49. Sykes, n.7, p.211.

50. Taylor, n.12, pp.20-21.

As Sokolow was busy in France the Zionists in England were busy preparing the draft of a resolution to be presented to the British Government as the basis of an official British statement on Zionism, while last mantle efforts were made to ensure British acceptance of the draft.⁵¹ Justice Brandeis assured Balfour that President Wilson looked with favour upon Zionism, while Weizmann tried to remove Balfour's fears that Britain's allies would not accept a pro-Zionist policy on the part of Britain. On 20 May 1917, Weizmann announced before the English Zionist Federation that the British Government was prepared to announce its support of the aims of Zionism.⁵²

At this stage the anti-Zionist forces in Britain started mobilizing in opposition to Political Zionism. Two leading British Jews David Alexander and Claude Mantefire⁵³ published a letter in The Times expressing their condemnation for the aims and objectives of political Zionism. Weizmann got apprehensive and wrote a reassuring

51. Ibid., p.21.

52. Ibid.

53. Sykes, n.8, pp.236-40.

letter to Balfour's secretary. He wrote, 'The second category of British Jews [the Assimilationists] will fall into line quickly when the declaration [the Balfour Declaration] is given to us'.⁵⁴ Weizmann being an astute person had already made a public declaration that the British Government was committed to support Zionism. This move of Weizmann, had, in effect, closed the door behind the British Government and made it impossible to turn back on the course it was following.⁵⁵

Balfour, in June, announced his readiness to receive a draft of Zionist proposals to be incorporated in an official statement of the British Government in support of Zionism. Zionists had prepared a complete formula in July and it was put before Balfour on the eighteenth of that month.⁵⁶ The Zionist formula mooted that the British Government announce its acceptance that Palestine be recognized since quo non as the National Home of the Jewish people, in order to build up their national life in Palestine. They should enjoy

54. Weizmann, n.5, p.179.

55. Taylor, n.12, p.21.

56. Jacob C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, a Documentary Record (Princeton, 1956), 11 (1914-1956), p.26.

conditions of internal autonomy and they should also enjoy the privilege of unconditional colonization. The cabinet accepted the principle that Palestine be recognized as the National Home of the Jewish people, but insisted that means and methods be worked out by the British Government and the Zionist organisation.⁵⁷ The leading Assimilationist British Jews protested against both the first and second formulas to the Cabinet. It was on account of pressure exerted by them that the final formula, known as the Balfour Declaration called for the following: (1) British support of the establishment of a National Home for the Jews in Palestine. (2) British co-operation in the achievement of this objective, and (3) an understanding that nothing shall be done to prejudice the rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.⁵⁸

This was far less than what the Zionists had expected. The Zionists had envisioned the creation of a Palestine which would be 'as Jewish as England is English'.⁵⁹ With such restrictions embodied in the Balfour Declaration a Palestine

57. The ESCO Foundation, n.3, p.105.

58. Taylor, n.12, p.22.

59. Ibid.

envisioned by the Jews could not be established. However, they had to compromise, since a declaration of some sort expressing favour for Zionism was vitally needed before the war ended. Zionists also extracted a favourable statement from Lloyd George that "when the time arrived for according representative institution to Palestine, if the Jews... had become a definite majority of the inhabitants then Palestine would thus become a Jewish Commonwealth".⁶⁰ This took the task of the Zionists further ahead in a particular direction. They had only to ensure a Jewish majority in Palestine.

The first phase of Zionist diplomacy successfully ended with the inclusion of Balfour Declaration into Herzl's programme. This programme had envisioned enlisting of support of Gentile nations in building a National Home for Jews in Palestine.

The Balfour Declaration was not the result simply of British design to establish a buffer to the Suez Canal and to win the support of world Jewry to the Allied cause. More accurately the coincidence of British and Zionist interests

60. The ESCO Foundation, n.3, p.113.

was employed by the Zionists to engender British support. Thus, the Balfour Declaration was the outcome of planned Zionist diplomacy.⁶¹

A British official who had come into contact with Weizmann summarized this diplomatic victory in the following words:

'Once of the best examples of... successful diplomacy is that by which Dr. Weizmann brought into existence the Jewish National Home... when [the first World War] began, his cause was hardly known to the principal statesmen of the victors. He once told me that 2,000 interviews had gone to the making of the Balfour Declaration. With unerring skill he adopted his arguments to the special circumstances of each statesman. To the British and Americans he could use Biblical language and awake a deep emotional undertone; to other nationalities he more often talked in terms of interest. Mr. Llyod George was told that Palestine was a little mountainous country not unlike Wales; with Lord Balfour the Philosophical background of Zionism could be surveyed, for Lord Cecil the problem was

61. Taylor, n.12, pp.22-3. Balfour Declaration has been discussed elaboratly in the third chapter.

placed in the setting of a new world organisation; while to Lord Milner the extension of imperial power could be vividly portrayed. To me, who dealt with these matters as a junior officer of the General Staff, he brought from many source all the evidence that could be obtained of the importance of a Jewish National Home to the strategic position of the British Empire, but he always indicated by a hundred shades and inflections of the voice that he believed that I could also appreciate better than my superiors other more subtle and recondite arguments. This skillful presentation of facts would, however, have been useless unless he had convinced all with whom he came into contact of the probity of his conduct and the reality of his trust in the will and strength of Britain.⁶²

After all these meetings, debates and manipulation the Zionists were in a position to get the Balfour declaration made on 17 November 1917 by the British government.⁶³

Now it remained for the Zionists to wrest the support of world Jewry and to colonize Palestine. The support of world Jewry would take time while the task of colonization was taken up immediately.

62. Sir Charles Webster, 'The Art and Practice of Diplomacy; in The Listener, 28 February, 1952, p.35. As quoted in Taylor, n.12, p.23.

63. Ibid.

Zionists, Paris Peace Conference, and the Mandate:

Balfour Declaration was officially accepted by France, Italy, the United States and Japan by the end of 1918. This was a considerable success of the Zionist movement.⁶⁴ After the victory of Allied powers a peace conference was convened in Paris in January 1919. A Zionist delegation represented the Zionist organisation and presented its case before the Supreme Council. Weizmann and Sokolow as members of the delegation addressed the Supreme Council and presented in a sophisticated way the Zionist case touching various aspects of draft resolutions which were contained in an official memorandum sent to the Supreme Council on February 3.⁶⁵

The Zionist resolution demanded:

1. The historic title of the Jews be recognized and admission of the right of Jews to reconstitute their National Home in Palestine.
2. The establishment of certain boundaries for Palestine, designed to include southern Lebanon, Mount Herman, Aqaba, and Transjordan.
3. The establishment of a Mandate for Palestine under the administration of Great Britain.

64. Andrews, n.1, pp.341-42.

65. Hurewitz, n.56, pp.45-50. See also Weizmann, n.5, pp.243-44.

4. Balfour Declaration be realized.
5. The promotion of Jewish colonization of Palestine.
6. The creation of a council of representative of the Jews of Palestine.

This Zionist formula was a framework in which the earlier framework in which the promises were made to them could be carried out.

The first action taken by the Peace Conference in regard to Palestine was the provision, contained in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League, calling for the establishment of temporary mandates in certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire.⁶⁶

The British delegation opened formal discussions with the Zionists on the matter of drafting what was to be the official mandate for Palestine. The Peace Conference, a month later, adopted the covenant of the League. David Hunter Miller, a member of the British delegation, received a letter dated 28 March 1919, written to him by Felix Frankfurter. In this Frankfurter outlined the basic points which

66. Taylor, n.12, p.26.

the Zionists wished to have embodied in the text of the Mandate.⁶⁷ These proposals were as follows:

- (1) the Balfour Declaration be re-stated in the text of the Mandate,
- (2) the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish National Home to be developed into an autonomous commonwealth and should be the guiding principle of the Mandate
- (3) when the people of Palestine became ready for autonomy, a representative government be established.

These proposals were subsequently revised. They were presented on 15 July 1919 to the British delegation as a draft to be considered for inclusion in the proposed treaty with Turkey.⁶⁸ This draft called for:

- (1) the ultimate aim of the mandate should be the creation in Palestine of a self governing commonwealth
- (2) the formation of a permanent Jewish council in Palestine

67. The ESCO Foundation, n.3, pp.164-68.

68. Ibid., p.169.

- (3) sponsorship of the principle of a Jewish National Home,
- (4) facilitation of Jewish immigration and colonization.
- (5) the establishment of Hebrew as the official language in Palestine.

There was a third revision. It went a step-further by suggesting that the proposed Jewish National Home should comprise all of Palestine.⁶⁹

Zionist proposals was that the Mandate for Palestine be dedicated to the creation of a Jewish state. The mandatory administration had to take up as its responsibility to strengthen the Jewish element in Palestine and was to continue in control of the country until such time as there were sufficient Jews in Palestine to make possible the establishment of a defacto Jewish state.⁷⁰

The British Government was disposed to accept the Zionist proposals and on 25 April 1920 the Supreme Council which was sitting at San Remo, assigned the mandate for Palestine to Great Britain. The text of the Treaty of

69. Ibid., pp.170-71.

70. Taylor, n.12, p.27.

Severes with Turkey, which was signed the following August, underwrote the Balfour Declaration⁷¹ and thus all that remained to ensure the fulfillment of the aim of Zionism was the adoption of a mandate text which upheld the basic programme of the Zionist proposals.

Lord Curzon, appointed as Foreign Secretary in the spring of 1920, created problems for the Zionists. Curzon was not a supporter of Zionism and was concerned over the growing tide of Arab opposition. Curzon was against Zionist sponsored clauses in the text of the mandate. He particularly opposed the two clauses, one proclaiming the historical connection of the Jews with Palestine and another calling for the eventual establishment of a self-governing commonwealth in Palestine.⁷² The Zionists through Balfour and Milner (Milner was a pro-Zionist Cabinet Minister), exerted their influence on the Government, but were successful only in having the clause concerning the historical connection of the Jews with Palestine.⁷³

71. Hurewitz, n.56, p.84.

72. The ESCO Foundation, n.3, p.172.

73. Ibid., p.173-74.

Zionists were flexible and were ready to compromise to an extent, as long as British Government officials were sympathetic to the Zionist cause. Weizmann had proclaimed the support of British Government to Zionism in the spring of 1917. He had informed the English Zionist Federation that the aim of Zionism would be realized by stages, and that the first stage would have to be one of British control of Palestine.⁷⁴ Later on Jewish connection with Palestine came to be recognized, the Balfour Declaration was under written, the Jews of Palestine were allowed the right of developing self governing institutions, the mandatory committed itself to the facilitation of Jewish immigration and provisions were made for the establishment of a Jewish Agency to assist the administration. This was all the Zionists really needed and the future was assured.⁷⁵ In effect the Mandate granted to Zionism nearly all that the Zionists representative asked for at the Paris Conference in 1919.⁷⁶

The Mandate and its Ratification: The Zionists in 1921 faced some hurdles with regard to the ratification of the draft

74. Ibid., p.98-99.

75. Taylor, n.12, p.28.

76. Harold W.V. Temperely (ed.), A History of the Peace Conference of Paris (London, 1924), VI, 176. As cited by Taylor, n.12, p.28.

Mandate agreed upon by the British cabinet and the Zionist Organisation. The Zionist ~~rights~~ and ~~aspirations~~ became international controversy since riots between Arabs and Jews broke out in Jaffa. An Arab delegation headed by Musa Kazim Pasha, arrived in London and presented its grievances to British Members of Parliament and to the Colonial Office.⁷⁷

The Draft Mandate had been presented to the League Council by this time, and had undergone two changes. The clause of the Balfour Declaration concerning the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine was inserted in the preamble of the new draft, whereas it had only. This change was of no great importance, but it did show a general concern over the potential threat of Zionism to the rights of the Arabs of Palestine.⁷⁸

The second change was more significant. A new article was inserted specifying that the Balfour Declaration could not apply to the territories east of Jordan. This was the curtailment of the original Zionist aspiration which wanted to create a Zionist state in Palestine including Transjordan. This was done in order to offer Transjordan to Abdullah as an emirate.

77. The Weizmann, n.5, p.280.

78. Taylor, n.12, p.34.

It was partly because of these setbacks and partly to raise money that Weizmann decided to make a tour of European capitals.⁷⁹ While Weizmann was in Europe trying to prevent any further alteration in the draft Mandate of 1920 and to counter the influence of the Arab delegation on political circles in London, the Zionist executive in London, was busy in extensive correspondence and discussion with the Colonial Office in an attempt to prevent any further changes in the draft of the Mandate.⁸⁰

A number of British newspapers began a campaign against Zionism, and in the House of Lords a motion, introduced by Lord Islington and others calling for the repeal of the Balfour Declaration, was passed.⁸¹ By this time, Weizmann had returned to London, and his first task was to prevent the House of Commons from passing a similar motion. Weizmann later wrote, 'In the Commons, with such champions as Mr. Churchill and Major Ormsby-Gore, we had better luck, and a similar motion was heavily defeated.'⁸²

79. Weizmann, n.5, p.284.

80. Ibid., p.290.

81. Ibid., pp.289-290.

82. Ibid., p.290.

On 1 July 1922, the British Government issued a statement which is known as Churchill White Paper.⁸³ This statement was issued in order to placate the objections against the pro-Zionist stance of the British Government. The White Paper denied that it was the intention of the British Government to create a Jewish state in the whole Palestine, that the Zionist representation in Palestine would be accorded a special position. The white paper separated Palestine from Transjordan and Jewish immigration was limited to its absorptive capacity.

The White Paper was regarded by Weizmann as curtailment of the provisions of Balfour Declaration. However he accepted it as far as it reaffirmed the right of the Jews to establish a national home in Palestine.⁸⁴

Weizmann met opposition, on account of its acceptance of the Churchill White Paper, at the annual conference of the World Zionist organisation in August 1922 held at Carlsbad. Realist as he was, he explained that the White Paper was a reality and there was ample risk in pressing for impossible demands. He emphasised on the need of fulfilment of the Zionist aims in stages.⁸⁵

83. Michael J. Cohen, Churchill and the Jews (London, 1985), pp.122-48.

84. Weizmann, n.5, pp.290-91.

85. Ibid., p.280.

The Churchill White Paper paved the way for the acceptance of the Mandate by the League. It subsequently recognized the right of the Zionists to colonize Palestine. Herzl's programme got started for being translated into action with British support.⁸⁶

Zionist Movement After World War I:

The leaders of the Zionist movement at the end of the World War I had the realization that an elaborate organisation which could take up the operations of the movement was vitally needed. In February 1919, Weizmann and Sokolow called a Zionist Conference in London.⁸⁷ In this conference, Weizmann was appointed to the executive, an honour which had not been extended to him before, even though he had served as de facto leader of the Zionist organisation for years.

In the summer of 1920, a second post war conference was convened in at London. At this conference, Weizmann was elected President of the Zionist Organisation, Nahum Sokolow, his close associate, was made Chairman of the

86. Taylor, n.12, p.37.

87. Israel Cohen, n.27, pp.123-125.

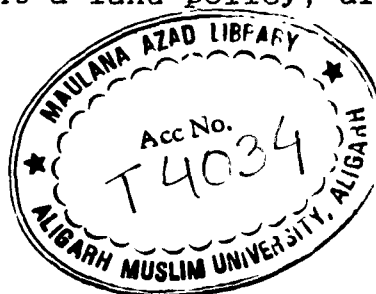
Executive.⁸⁸ The conference also passed the following resolutions:

- (i) the Organization is determined to live at peace with the non-Jewish communities in Palestine.
- (ii) all land in Palestine colonized by Jews is eventually to become the common property of the Jewish people,
- (iii) a Jewish National Fund will be established to employ voluntary contributions for the purpose of making the land of Palestine the common property of the Jewish people;
- (iv) a Central Immigration Office will be created in Palestine and Palestine offices will be opened in all countries expected to furnish contingents of young immigrants.⁸⁹

The London conference concentrated mainly on the second aspect of the programme. A consolidated immigration organisation was provided, and a special fund was established to implement a land policy, articulated to go

88. Ibid., p.125.

89. Ibid., pp.125-26.



'hand in hand' with the immigration policy. The conference resolution to live at peace with the non-Jewish communities in Palestine must be viewed in the light of this programme of planned acquisition.⁹⁰

The London conference of 1920 appointed a commission to call a Zionist Congress, and accordingly the first Zionist Congress since before the war. The twelfth Zionist Congress was convened at Carlsbad in September 1921.⁹¹ The 12th Zionist Congress confirmed Weizmann as the President of the organisation and Sokolow as the President of the Executive.⁹² Weizmann now was heading an elaborate organisation to carry the aims of political Zionism to its fulfillment. He headed a central office, the task of which was to maintain political contact with Colonial Office of the British Government, thus providing the machinery with which to maintain British support and to oversee the activities of Zionists throughout the world. Under the Central office was an executive group composed of the London and Palestine executives, the Actions Committee, and the Central Council. The London offices maintained close

90. Taylor, n.12, p.39.

91. Israel Cohen, n.27, pp.127-32.

92. Ibid., p.131.

relations with the League of Nations,⁹³ the French Government, and the Italian Government through special Bureaus. The Arabs had no such voice with the permanent Mandate Commission in Geneva. The London office also controlled the colonization funds and were advised on financial matters by a Financial and Economic Council. The Palestine Executive replaced the Zionist Commission in Palestine and was charged with supervision of the Jewish community in Palestine and Jewish immigration into the country. The Jewish community in Palestine was represented by a Constituent Assembly (Asefath Hanivharim) which elected a National Council (Vaad Leumi). A Robbinical Council was also established.⁹⁴

To ensure that the Palestine executive should have, and maintain good support alongwith the British Administration, Weizmann arranged for the appointment of a British officer of Jewish faith to the Palestine Executive. At the end of 1922, Dr. Eder, a leading personality of the Palestine Executive, retired from office. In search of a replacement, Weizmann approached General Macdonough of British Military

93. Antonius, n.37, pp.388-89.

94. Taylor, n.12, p.40.

Intelligence, asking him to suggest a candidate one "...belonging to both worlds, English as well as Jewish...."⁹⁵ Macdonough suggested Colonel Fred Kisch, a member of Military Intelligence, a British officer in every sense, and the son of an East European Jew who had belonged to Choveve Zion. "From every point of view, Kisch was the perfect man. He was acquainted with High Commissioner Samuel, he could hold the respect of the British officers in the Palestine Administration, he could feel at home with Zionists, and he was trained in Intelligence, the key to Zionist diplomacy. It is indeed strange that the question of dual loyalty never was brought up in the case of Kisch. Somehow, Weizmann was always a genius at making what would ordinarily be considered unnatural seem innocuous and sensible."⁹⁶

Establishment of Jewish Agency: Uptill now Weizmann was successful in retaining and strengthening of British support an in laying the ground work for the Jewish colonization of Palestine. The third requirement of the Jewish programme was

95. Weizmann, n.5, p.295.

96. Taylor, n.12, p.42.

winning the support of World Jewry to the cause of political Zionism. A machinery had to be installed to recruit a large group of non-Zionist Jews. The Jewish Agency was entrusted with this task.

It is written in the text of the Mandate that ... "an appropriate Jewish Agency shall be recognised as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish population in Palestine..."⁹⁷ According to the text of the Mandate the Zionist Organisation was to serve as such an agency. At the Carlsbad Zionist conference of 1922, the Zionist Organisation formally accepted the rights and duties of the Jewish Agency expressing that 'the Jewish Agency shall represent the whole Jewish people'.⁹⁸

As far as the fulfillment of the aims of political Zionism were concerned the Jewish Agency, till now, could hardly be considered a representative body of world Jewry. Winning the support of world Jewry was the third Herzelian plan and Jewish Agency presented itself as the ideal

97. Hurewitz, n.56, pp.107-8.

98. Cohen, n.27, p.170.

solution. There was another obstacle - the opposition to the extension of the Jewish Agency among Zionists. The group led by Brandeis regarded the extension as unnecessary since he was apprehensive of the influence of non Zionists in the agency. Weizmann was lucky enough to see the passage of the leadership of American Zionism from the hands of Brandeis⁹⁹ In February 1923, the Action Committee passed a resolution stating; that the controlling organ of the Jewish Agency shall be responsible to a body representative of the Jewish people'.¹⁰⁰ The committee resolved to enter into negotiations with leading Jewish communities in order to gain their participation in the Jewish Agency.¹⁰¹ At the Congress of 1925, a party known as the Revisionists led by Vladimir Jabotinsky opposed extension on the basis that Zionist policy could not be entrusted to Jews lacking strong nationalist convictions.¹⁰² However, the Congress passed a resolution favouring the establishment of a Council composed equally of Zionists and non-Zionist Jews. An action plan was envisaged for the Jewish Agency on the following principles:

99. Cohen, n.84, pp.87-88.

100. Weizmann, n.5, p.307.

101. Cohen, n.83, p.170.

102. Ibid., p.125.

- (1) the development of a continuously increasing volume of Jewish immigration into Palestine,
- (2) the redemption of the land in Palestine as Jewish public property,
- (3) agricultural colonization based on Jewish labour.
- (4) the promotion of Hebrew language and culture in Palestine.¹⁰³

The Congress agreed to the extension of the Agency, even though the matter remained controversial until 1929, and specifications ensuring the fulfilment of Zionist policy were established. The Congress further guaranteed that the President of the Zionist Organisation would be the President of the enlarged Jewish Agency. It also stated that of the non-Zionist participants forty percent should be from America, which contained a large number of non-Zionist Jews and therefore was a major objective in the Zionist bid for universal Jewish support.

Louis Marchall and Felix Warburg were two recognised leaders of American Jewry. Warburg was a convert Zionist about whom Weizmann remarked, ' I have seldom witnessed a more complete conversion'.¹⁰⁴ Through Marshall and Warburg.

103. Fredrick H. Kisch, Palestine Diary (London, 1938), p.238.

104. Weizmann, n.5, p.310.

American Jewry began to join the Zionist movement, to assist its work and to bear much of its financial burden. It was for this reason that the Congress of 1925 specified that 40% of the non-Zionist representation on the Jewish Agency was to be American. Marshall and Warburg assured Weizmann of financial and moral support from American Jewry.¹⁰⁵

Moreover, as a safeguard, that the new Agency would not fall under non-Zionist control, the Zionists obtained an assurance from the British Government to the effect that, should the partnership between Zionists and non-Zionists dissolve, the Zionist Organisation alone would be recognized as the Jewish Agency.¹⁰⁶

Zionist Diplomacy Till the end of World War II:

In the 1920s Zionists had succeeded in building up the infrastructure and were ready, to implement their policies. They had started building the struggle for Palestine which came to ahead in the 1930s.¹⁰⁷

The Conservatives were in power from October 1922 to June 1929, except for a brief period of the first Macdonald

105. Ibid., p.314.

106. Cohen, n.27, p.127.

107. Taylor, n.12, p.47.

Government from January to November of 1924. The Conservatives stood by the Balfour Declaration¹⁰⁸ and there was no hindrance created with the change of Government. In Geneva, the Permanent Mandate Commission started getting concerned over the problem of Palestine Arabs in 1924 but the Zionists opened a special Bureau there in the following year. However the succeeding sessions of the Mandates Commission were to show traces of its effect.¹⁰⁹ Weizmann's personal contacts with leading members of the Commission served to develop a favourable attitude towards Zionism in that body.¹¹⁰

After the issue of the Churchill White Paper in 1922, a Labour Schedule was established to regulate the immigrate of Jewish workers in accordance with the economic absorptive capacity of Palestine.¹¹¹ The Zionist Organisation guaranteed the support of many of the immigrants for the first year of their stay in Palestine,¹¹² and the Histadrut, or General Federation of Jewish Labour in Palestine, served

108. The ESCO Foundation, n.3, p.288.

109. Weizmann, n.5, p.326.

110. Ibid.

111. The ESCO Foundation, n.3, p.317.

112. Ibid., p. 316.

as an employment agency for the new comers.¹¹³ In 1923, Jews possessing capital assets amounting to \$ 2,500 or more were allowed to immigrate outside of the Labour Schedule.¹¹⁴

It is particularly of interest to note the attitude of Weizmann towards this Jewish immigration, since it shows the true character of political Zionism: '... We must see to it that we direct this stream, ' and do not allow it to deflect us from our goal'.¹¹⁵

The leaders and responsible officers of the Zionist movement regarded themselves as a disciplined vanguard, an inner elite, of a Jewish movement which they considered to be the one answer to the Jewish Question. And their attitude, even towards Jews, was coloured by their zeal to complete the work of Zionism. Thus, they were impatient with anything connected with Palestine which did not clearly contribute to the establishment of Jewish statehood, and resentful of those things which in anyway acted against the interests of the movement.¹¹⁶

113. Andrews, n.1, Vol.2, p.26.

114. Weizmann, n.5, p.300.

115. Ibid., p.301.

116. Taylor, n.12, p.48.

Arabs of Palestine resented the Zionist moves in Palestine. Land grabbing had displaced many Arabs. Soon after the 16th Zionist Congress rioting broke out in Palestine, which continued intermittently. Numerous commissions were sent by the British government. They suggested restriction of Jewish immigration. But as in the past, a set back to Zionism on account of the report of a Commission which was sent to see for itself, the cause of the troubles of Palestine, was reversed by the activity of Zionist diplomacy in London. Through propaganda, political pressure, and the use of the recruits of Zionism in high places, a government policy decision based on the findings of its own Commission was reversed. Those who saw things for themselves realized, that as Zionism was attaining its goal, there was an accompanying breach in the provision of the Balfour Declaration regarding the rights of the non Zionist communities in Palestine. Thus, they voiced their objections, remaining true to the provisions of the Declaration. The Cabinets, on the other hand, either did not grasp what was going on or were forced to look the other way because of the pressure that was being applied. The Zionist Organisations of the 1930s were not like the Zionist Organisation of the war years. In those earlier years they had to wait for their friends to come to power, but in the

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1930s they did not hesitate to bend even a Prime Minister to their will, if that was necessary.¹¹⁷

With War clouds looming over the European horizon, the British called the London Conference in 1939 to try to settle the Arab-Jewish controversy. The Famous MacDonald White Paper, issued on 17 May 1939, imposed severe restriction on Jewish immigration.¹¹⁸ The Zionist Congress rejected the White Paper as illegal. The 1939 White Paper, however, came as a major shock and setback to Zionist diplomacy. The leaders of the movement immediately sought a reorientation of Zionism in the face of the new turn of events. Through the war years, just such a reorientation took place in terms of policy, organisation, and of a shift in political concentration from Great Britain to the United States.¹¹⁹

Throughout the interwar period, the Mandate for Palestine had served the Jewish cause in gradual building up of Jewish immigration to result in the eventual Jewish majority in Palestine. The MacDonald White Paper thwarted

117. Taylor, n.12, p.51.

118. Lenezowski, George, The Middle East in World Affairs, (New York, 1953), pp.271-72.

119. Taylor, n.12, p.53.

this effort. The policy of gradualism championed by Weizmann was in question. This called for a change. "Previously Mandate had been supported because its existence was consonant with the desires of Zionism, but, once the British showed unwillingness to continue their benign attitude towards the Zionists, the latter turned against their former benefactors and decided to work actively for the termination of the Mandate for Palestine".¹²⁰

The attacks on White Paper assumed the form of an onslaught against the Mandate itself. The first indication of this important policy shift was given by Dr. Weizmann himself who, ironically, was the strongest backer of co-operation with the Mandate. Weizmann, in mid December 1939, met Winston Churchill and conveyed to him his intentions of building up a Zionist state with three to four million Jews in it. Churchill replied that such a plan met entirely with his approval.¹²¹ "With this preliminary agreement, Zionism began to depart from a phase of advantageous waiting to enter one characterized by active preparation for the fulfillment of the basic aim of Zionism - the creation of the Jewish State".¹²²

120. Ibid., p.54.

121. Ibid.

122. Ibid., pp.54-5.

The active opposition to Mandate went alongwith a campaign in the West specially in America. This was necessary in order to reorient Zionist members to the new policy. In early 1940 a conference in Washington was informed by the Jewish National Fund that the policy of the Fund was to preclude any possible partition of Palestine by purchasing frontier areas.¹²³ Nahum Goldmann defined the territory of Jewish national interest as including Transjordan.¹²⁴ This gave the warning that time was at hand to pave the way for the establishment of a Jewish State in all of Palestine. At a convention of Canadian Zionists a similar proclamation was made by the legal adviser of the Jewish Agency, Dr. Bernard Joseph.¹²⁵ On 29 March 1941, Dr Weizmann announced at Chicago that after the war a Jewish commonwealth could be set up side by side with Arab Federation in the Middle East.¹²⁶

These oft repeated pronouncements led the Western Zionist Jewry to support in active way to the idea of the imminent establishment of Israel as a state once the war was

123. Kirk George, E. The Middle East in the War (London, 1953), p.233.

124. Ibid., p.243.

125. Ibid.

126. Ibid.

over. The Zionist Organisation of America resolved as early as 7 September 1971 to demand the creation of a Jewish commonwealth within the historic boundaries of Palestine.¹²⁷

However, this was not enough. It was felt necessary for an important body of the Zionist diaspora to hold at a suitable place and unanimously declare the decision of World Zionism to bid for the establishment of Israel upon the completion of the war. An emergency committee was formed in America to serve as the wartime head quarters of the Zionist Organisation. This emergency committee was willing to sponsor the convention.¹²⁸ Thus an extraordinary conference of American, European and Palestinian Zionists was held at the Biltmore Hotel in New York city in May 1942.

The Zionists Conference was addressed by three top leaders of Zionism.¹²⁹ Weizmann, Ben Gurion, and Nahum Goldmann, Chairman of the Administrative Committee of the World Jewish Congress. Ben Gurion demanded that the Jewish Agency be given full control over immigration into Palestine and that the concept of binationalism be discarded if it

127. Ibid.

128. Hurewitz, n.56, p.234.

129. The ESCO Foundation, n.3, II, p.1080-1083.

entailed offering Palestinian Arabs equal representation with Jews in the departments of government.¹³⁰ Here lay the basic formula of the new Zionists policy, for this could lead to only one outcome the creation of a Jewish State. The conference endorsed Ben Gurion's formula. Thus the underlying motive of political Zionists came to surface. Full implementation of Herzelian programme was taken up through already planned policy of activism.¹³¹

The Conference on 11 May 1942 adopted a set of resolutions known collectively as the Biltmore Programme.¹³² The programme in short enumerated the following (1) recognition that the purpose of the provisions in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate declaring the historic connection of the Jewish people with Palestine was to found there a Jewish commonwealth.¹³³ This demand of the Biltmore programme was made inspite of the fact that the Churchill White Paper of 1922 denied that the purpose of the Balfour Declaration was to make Palestine 'as Jewish as England is

130. Ibid. p.1062.

131. Taylor, n.12, p.57.

132. Hurewitz, n.56, pp.234-35.

133. Ibid.

English' or that the development of the Jewish National Home meant the imposition of Jewish nationality upon the people of Palestine as a whole.¹³⁴ (2) the invalidation of the MacDonald White Paper, (3) a solution of the problem of Jewish homelessness as part of the post-war settlement, (4) the transfer of control of immigration into Palestine to the Jewish Agency, (5) the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish commonwealth. The points 'three' and 'four' implied that the Zionists solution was the only solution to Palestine problem and that the Agency should be accorded essential powers of a sovereign government respectively.¹³⁵

The Biltmore Programme gave tremendous impetus to the new policy of the Zionists leadership. It also was successful in bringing in its fold a great majority of World Zionism, positively behind the platform of imminent statehood. The Zionist Organisation, Haddassah, Mizrachi and other Labour groups adopted the Biltmore programme in October 1942. On 6 November, the General Council of the World Zionist Organisation endorsed the programme. The Biltmore programme had been endorsed by the General Council

134. Taylor, n.12, p.58.

135. Ibid.

in 1942 in spite of opposition among Jews in the United States and Palestine.¹³⁶ When the World War came to a close, a Zionist Conference was held in August 1945. The thinking of such a large majority of the Zionists had been geared to the Biltmore programme in such a war that it was strongly endorsed.¹³⁷

Shift from U.K. to U.S.A.:

Since the beginning of World War I, political Zionism had recruited Gentile support which was one of the basic tenets of Herzlian programme. It had succeeded in receiving the assistance of the British Government through the recruitment of cabinet ministers and other British political leaders. The Zionist attitude towards Great Britain underwent a fundamental change since the publication of White Paper of 1939 and subsequent formulation of new Zionist policy. As the situation stood now from the Zionist perspective the British Colonial Office and the Mandate

136. Kermit Roosevelt, 'The Partition of Palestine: a lesson in Pressure Politics', Middle East Journal (Washington, D.C. Jan.1948), p.4.

137. Taylor, n.12, p.58.

authorities in particular, were regarded as enemies and hindrance to the realization of fundamental objectives of Zionism.¹³⁸

The reasons mentioned above were enough for the Zionists to turn towards America. Initially the tactic was to apply American pressure on the British Policy.

The Zionist search for American support and making America a centre of Zionist activities had two main underlying reasons.

- (1) The Zionist opposition to 1939 White Paper and British intransigence over it.
- (2) To replace Great Britain for the Gentile support.

There was an anticipation in the Zionist circle that if the Allied powers did win the war the U.S. would emerge as the leader of the West and it would be possible for them to translate the Biltmore programme into action with the gentile support in America. "The Zionists went about their task on three different levels to win for their cause the American people, the Congress and the Administration".¹³⁹

138. Taylor, n.12, p.59.

139. Ibid., p.75.

Winning American people, Congress and Administration: The American Zionist Emergency Council, previously known as American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs started projecting elaborate propaganda for the Zionist cause in America.¹⁴⁰ The committee consisted of 76 state and regional branches with 380 committees on the local level.¹⁴¹ Another organisation known as American Palestine Committee was established. The objective of this committee was to muster the support of Christians in America. Another Organisation related to above organisations was launched. This was known as the Christian Council on Palestine. The aim and purpose of this Christian Council was to concentrate on the clergymen to inculcate a sense of oneness with Zionism. There was a prevalent Protestant opinion in America. This was congenial to the Zionists and they carefully exploited it.¹⁴²

Besides winning the support of clergymen and church groups, the Zionists also needed the cooperation of

140. Hurewitz, Jacob C. The Struggle for Palestine, the Fallacies and Dangers of Political Zionism (New York, 1919), pp.209-10.

141. Ibid., p.210.

142. Kirk, n.130, p.330.

journalists and persons in eminent positions.¹⁴³ Thus Zionist campaign in 1943 got in full swing and its effort was to...inject Zionism political nationalism into every crevice of the American scene'.¹⁴⁴ On the surface level it seemed that Zionist propaganda campaign was launched to unite opposition to the 1939 White Paper but the underlying aim was to promote support for Zionism's new policy of the establishment of Jewish statehood.¹⁴⁵

The general ignorance of American gentile of Zionism and the Zionist ingenuity led to the building of considerable gentile support for Zionists.

The Zionists in the course of amassing support among the gentile did not neglect American Jewry. American Jewry at that time was assimilationist by tradition.¹⁴⁶ The time was ripe to implement the third point of the Herzelian programme - the development of Jewish support.

To put the plan into action the Palestine Executive sent propaganda officers known as 'schbehim' to the U.S. to

143. Hurewitz, n.140, p.210.

144. Elmer Burger, The Jewish Dilemma (New York, 1946), p.163.

145. Ibid., p.165.

146. Alfred M. Lilienthal, What Price Israel, (Chicago, 1953), p.18.

convince American Jewry that political Zionism was the only solution to the crisis then facing world Jewry.¹⁴⁷

In this effort Zionists' attempt to win American Jewry was as successful as the campaign to win the American gentile public.

Congress: A through going plan was envisaged by the Zionists for ultimate conversion of the United States Congress to the Zionist cause. The enrolment of 67 Senators and 143 Representatives was made in the American Palestine Committee. In December 1942 one third of the Senate alongwith one and a half thousand other public figures signed a proclamation demanding the creation of a Jewish Army.¹⁴⁸

The Zionists encouraged by this initial success needed a Congressional declaration backing the Biltmore Programme. In October 1943, a group of 500 rabbis arrived at the Capital Hill and presented Zionist demands to Vice-President

147. Kirk, n.123, p.329.

148. Ibid., p.247.

Wallace.¹⁴⁹ This move was supported by Zionist lobbies.¹⁵⁰ Resolutions endorsing the Biltmore programme were introduced in both houses of Congress in January 1944.¹⁵¹ The resolutions were temporarily shelved on the advice of the chief of Staff, General Marshall. Marshall felt that their passage would be detrimental to allied war effort.¹⁵² Nonetheless it is surprising that America came so close to committing itself officially to a movement whose aims and objectives were not clearly understood. However this was the outcome of barely three years of Zionist concentration in America.¹⁵³

Though the resolutions were shelved in the Congress the Zionists pursued their aims at the national conventions the following summer. This resulted in the adoption by both Party Convention of pro-Zionist planks.¹⁵⁴ The Zionist influence was so intense that neither Party hoped to win without the support of Jewish electorate.

149. Frank C. Sakran, Palestine Dilemma, Arab Rights Versus Zionist Aspirations (Washington D.C. 1948), p.168.

150. Hurewitz, n.140, p.213.

151. The ESCO Foundation, n.3, Vol.II, p.1115.

152. Lenezkowski, n.126, p.274.

153. Taylor, n.12, p.79.

154. Sakran, n.149, pp.171-72.

Administration: To win the U.S. administration's support Weizmann made three trips to America. He devoted considerable time and energy to win Administrations commitment to Zionism and the Biltmore programme. He talked to Roosevelt in February 1940 seeking American stand opposing the 1939 White Paper. He carefully avoided the subject of statehood. Nevertheless Roosevelt hesitated to grant special favour to Zionism seeking a joint Arab-Zionist solution to the problem of Palestine.¹⁵⁵

Weizmann traveled to America again in the spring of 1941. There he talked to Sumner Welles and other top government officials. However state Department officials and others charged with U.S. policy in the Middle East as a whole would not regard Zionist interests as isolated or special. As the policies suggested by British commissions had been reversed, so, too, could the opinions of American experts on the Middle East be reversed in Washington. Weizmann, therefore continued to concentrate on the top levels, where decisions from below could easily be reversed.¹⁵⁶

155. Taylor, n.12, pp.80-81.

156. Ibid., pp.81-82.

During the time when Congressional Resolutions endorsing Jewish statehood were kept suspended Rabbis Wise and Silver were successful in convincing Roosevelt to make a statement conveying American opposition to 1939 White Paper.

A year later on 16 March 1945 Wise tried to wrest another statement from Roosevelt regarding his meeting with Ibn Saud after Yalta Conference. Roosevelt stated simply that he had not changed his position on Zionism.¹⁵⁷

Even though the Zionists were by and large unsuccessful in their dealings with Roosevelt, they succeeded during his Administration in seeking to influence American policy on the Middle East through the White House. During the Presidency of Truman this tactic brought handsome reward. With the advent of Truman, the Administration joined the Congress and the public to become a new prize in the Zionist struggle for Jewish statehood.¹⁵⁸

Later on when the Zionist state was created, the new nation felicitated Chaim Weizmann, for decades the recognized

157. Ibid., p.83.

158. Taylor, n.12, pp.83-84.

leader of the Zionist movement by electing him the first President. Weizmann minimized his role and insisted that the person, most responsible, for the creation of the state of Israel was Harry S. Truman.¹⁵⁹ Truman's support was the master stroke of Zionist diplomacy in the realms of realpolitik.

159. John Snetsingers, Truman, the Jewish Vote and the Creation of Israel (Stanford, 1974), p.11.

CHAPTER-III

GREAT BRITAIN, ZIONISM AND THE PALESTINE QUESTION

The Middle East and British War Policy:

"It was the outbreak of the World War I that suddenly invested Palestine with a new importance in Allied military calculations. From then on, England based its Near Eastern policy on a central and immutable criterion, the security of Suez Canal".¹ This vital passageway for British commerce, an artery of transport for the military manpower reserves of the overseas empires was threatened twice during January 1915 and August 1916 on account of Turkish military expedition. Though the attacks were repelled, Britain became aware of the vulnerability of the Suez to such kinds of assault from neighbouring Palestine. To counter this threat military headquarters in Cairo devoted their attention to new political strategy. This was to mobilize the Ottoman Empire's restive Arab subjects to their side by luring them to the promise of independence and sovereignty.²

From the British point of view, status of those lands comprising the Ottoman Empire had been of importance since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Anglo -Turkish friendship had been possible at that point because of the mutual interest in frustrating the efforts at direct

1. Howard M. Sachar, A History of Israel, From The Rise of Zionism To our Time (Oxford, 1977), p.92.

2. Ibid.

political penetration made by Napoleonic France. It was strengthened as the century progressed under the pressure of Russian expansionism³.

With the consolidation of control in India, successive British governments came to hold the strategic value of the Ottoman Empire's Arab regions in ever greater regard. Generals and statesmen alike acknowledged the necessity for retaining unimpeded access to the two routs linking England with her Indian Empire and the Orient: The land route across Syria and Mesopotamia to the Persian Gulf; and the waterway (Suez Canal) connecting the Mediterranean Sea with the Indian Ocean.⁴

The legacy of the British foreign policy was to support the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire although annexation of Cyprus in 1878 and the occupation of Egypt in 1882 were stark aberrations. The conversion of Turkish policy from professed neutrality to belligerency in late

3. See Sir John A.R. Mariott, The Eastern Question: An Historical Study in European Diplomacy (London, 1940); H.W.V. Temperley, England and the Near East (London, 1964). These studies have thoroughly dealt Britain's relationship with Eastern Question.
4. Aaraon S. Klieman, Foundation of British policy in the Arab World: The Cairo Conference of 1921 (London, 1970), p.3.

1914 forced a complete rethinking as far as British military and political strategies were concerned.

After considerable delay, and only in response to intense diplomatic pressure from France and Russia, the British Government sought to formulate its ultimate war aims and territorial ambitions in the Middle East. An inter-departmental committee was specifically constituted under the Chairmanship of Sir Maurice de Bunsen to consider British desiderata in Turkey. The committee reviewed in detail the existing interests of Great Britain in the region and then submitted a secret report to the War Council on 30th June 1915.⁵

According to the report nine specific desiderata in the Arab region were distinguished. Three of these pertained to the Arab peoples. They called for the fulfillment of pledges under consideration or already given to the several Sheikhs of the Arabian Peninsula and, "Generally maintenance of the assurances given to the Sharif of Mecca and the Arabs"; insurance that Arabia and the Muslim holy places would remain "under independent Muslim rule"; and , lastly, a settlement of the question of Palestine and the holy places of Christendom.⁶

5. Ibid., p.4.

6. Ibid., p.5.

However, the moderate proposals of the de Bunsen committee were rejected though its basic postulates were shared by Foreign Office, India Office, and War Office in their future dealings with the Arabs, the French, and the Zionists.⁷

British War promises to the Arabs:

The emergence of the Arabs as a distinctive entity, and their recognition as such by the British Government, was one of the major results of Anglo-Turkish hostility. The state of war permitted Britain to exploit grievances between Arabs and Turks and to deal directly with the Arab spokesmen.⁸ As early as November 1914, a message had been sent to Sharif Hussain of Mecca, ruler of Hejaz, at the instruction of Lord Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War. It advised that:

If the Amir and Arabs in general assist Great Britain in this conflict that has been forced upon us by Turkey, Great Britain will promise not to intervene in any manner whatsoever, whether in things religious or otherwise.... Till now we have defended and befriended Islam in the person of the Turk: henceforward it shall be in that of the noble Arab.... It

7. Ibid., p.6.

8. See Zeine N. Zeine, Arab Turkish Relations and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism (Beirut, 1958), Bernard Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey (London, 1961).

would be well if your Highness could convey to your followers and devotees, who are found throughout the world in every country, the good tidings of the freedom of Arabs and the rising of the sun over Arabia.⁹

It should be noted that the British encouraged the Sharif in his personal ambitions, even intimating to him that "it may be that an Arab of true race will assume the Caliphate of Mecca or Medina'. They also tended to overestimate the scope of his prestige and authority and the extent of Arab homogeneity.¹⁰

This message, and an earlier visit by the Sharif's son Abdullah, to the British Residency in Cairo soon led to a direct correspondence between the British High Commissioner for Egypt and the ruler of Hijaz concerning prospects for an alliance.

Hussein - McMahon Correspondence:

A correspondence -- later known as Hussein -- McMahon Correspondence consisting of ten letters, was exchanged during the period from July 1915 to March 1916 which culminated in a British promise of Arab independence.¹¹

9. Cabinet meetings, 271, p.144 (Committees General Series, 1915), Hereinafter CAB.

10. Aaron, n.4, p.8.

11. Sami Hadawi, Bitter Harvest, (New York, 1967), p.14.

In his opening letter of 14 July 1915 Sharif Hussein sought to gain the endorsement of Great Britain for his definition of Arab aspirations. He began by stating that "the whole of the Arab nation without exception have decided in these last years to live, and to accomplish their freedom, and grasp the reigns of their administration both in theory and practice".¹² He then asked approval of several "fundamental propositions", the most important being that England should acknowledge "the independence of the Arab countries, bounded on the north by Mersina and Adana up to 37° of latitude...; on the east by the borders of Persia up to the Gulf of Basra; on the south by the Indian Ocean; on the west by the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea up to Mersina."¹³ It is presumed that Sharif Hussein was influenced in his claim by a protocol drawn up early in 1915 by secret societies of Arab nationalists at Damascus.¹⁴ In return the Sharif promised to acknowledge the preferential position of England in all

12. Parliamentary command paper: "Correspondence between Sir Henry McMahon, His Majesties High Commission in Cairo and the Sherif Hussain of Mecca, July, 1915-March 1916" (Cmd. 5957), p.3, hereinafter cited as Cmd.

13. Ibid.

14. Antonius George, The Arab Awakening, (Philadelphia, 1939), pp.157-58.

economic enterprises in the Arab countries. Replying on 30 August, Sir Henry McMahon expressed satisfaction that "Arab interest are English interests and English Arab", and that "our desire [is] for an independent Arabia". Regarding, the question of limits and boundaries, he advised that "it would appear to be premature to consume our time in discussing such details in the heat of war".¹⁵

This first exchange of letters set the tone for future correspondence by revealing divergent emphasis. In communicating with the Sharif, McMahon had but one immediate objective: to have the Arabs commit themselves against their political suzerain and co-religionists. He thus sought to avoid lengthy, detailed negotiations over exact boundaries and spoke initially only of an independent Arabia. The Sharif, on his part, was specific both with regard to the nature of military and financial support expected of Britain and to the territorial dimensions of future Arab rule. However, Sharif Hussein was vague in the matters of less immediate concern; he did not specify what form this future independence might take: whether one vast kingdom or several units, each with a separate form of government yet coming

15. Cmd. 5957, p.3.

together to form a confederation.¹⁶ Thus, for example, on September 9, Hussein wrote, "I am myself, with all my might carrying out in my country...all things which tend to benefit the rest of the Kingdom", to which McMahon replied on 24 October: Great Britain would advise and assist to establish "what may appear to be the most suitable forms of government in these various territories".¹⁷

Sharif Hussein kept on insisting for a discussion of frontiers, and McMahon, having realized that the Sharif regarded this question as one of vital and urgent importance and would delay entering the war, sought instructions from London. He was then authorized to make the following statement in his letter of 24 October:

The two districts of Mersina and Alexandretta and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus Homs, Hama and Aleppo cannot be said to be purely Arab and should be excluded from the limits demanded.

16. Aaron, n.4., p.9.

17. Cmd. 5957, p.6.

With the above modification, and without prejudice to our existing treaties with Arab chiefs, we accept those limits. As for those regions lying within those frontiers wherein Great Britain is free to act without detriment to the interest of her ally, France, I am empowered in the name of the Government of Great Britain to give the following assurances and make the following reply to your letter:

(i) Subject to the above modifications, Great Britain is prepared to recognize and support the independence of the Arabs in all the regions within the limits demanded by the Sharif of Mecca...¹⁸

Encouraged by this acceptance of his principal demand for independence, Hussein wrote back on 5 November, retracting his insistence upon the inclusion of vilayets of Mersina and Adana in the Arab Kingdom. At the same time, however, he did stress that the vilayets of Aleppo and Beirut and their sea coasts were purely Arab and that the vilayets in Mesopotamia were historically bound to the Arabs. But he was willing to leave the latter under British administration for a short time in return for a suitable sum paid as compensation to the Arab Kingdom for the period of

18. Ibid.

occupation". Sheif Hussein emphasized on this point that he had made the utmost in concessions for the sake of agreement.¹⁹

The British Government, having consented reluctantly to the Sharif's territorial claims, subsequently introduced modifications. By the time McMahon sent his letter of 14 December to Mecca, three reservations were apparent: (i) further consideration would have to be given to Aleppo and Beirut, "as the interest of our ally, France, are involved in them both".

(ii) since Britain could not repudiate agreements already in existences those which were then in effect with Arab Chiefs would still apply "to all territories included in the Arab Kingdom"

(iii) Britain insisted that her established position and interest in Mesopotamia would necessitate special administrative arrangements. Twenty thousand British pounds sterling, an "earnest of intentions", accompanied the letter in the hope of softening the Sharif's reaction.²⁰

19. Aaron, n.4, p.10.

20. Cmd 5957, Letter No.6 dated in December 1915, pp.11-12.

In his final letter of 1 January 1916, the Sharif said that he would not press an issue which might impair the alliance between Great Britain and France. "Yet we find it our duty that the eminent Minister should be sure that, at the first opportunity after this war is finished, we shall ask you (what we avert our eyes from today) for what we now leave to France in Beirut and its coasts.... It is impossible to allow any derogation that gives France, or any other Power, a span of land in those regions."²¹

Sir Henry McMahon answered this in his fourth letter of 25 January 1916, by taking note of the Sharif's "desire to avoid anything which might possibly injure the alliance between Great Britain and France", and assured him that the friendship between the two countries would endure after the war.²²

The Sharif, on his part, never referred to the boundary question again during the negotiations but the claims, not accepted by the British Government, were not withdrawn.²³

21. Ibid., Letter no.7 and 1 January 1916, pp.12-14.

22. Ibid., Letter no.8 dated 25 January 1916, pp.14-15.

23. Robert John an Sami Hadawi, The Palestine Diary, Vol.I, (Beirut, 1970), p.40.

The Sykes - Picot Agreement (1916): While the British Government through its official representative in Cairo was negotiating on the possibility of an agreement with the Arabs by promising them independence in a region to include Palestine, other representatives were negotiating secretly with France and Russia for dividing control of the Asiatic portions of the Ottoman Empire after victory.²⁴

As the major ally France's claim to preference in parts of Syria could not be ignored. The British Foreign Minister, Sir Edward Grey, told the French Ambassador in London, Paul Cambon, on 21 October, 1915, of the exchanges of letters with Sharif Hussein and suggested that the two governments arrive at an understanding with their Russian ally on their future interests in the Ottoman Empire.²⁵

M. Picot was appointed French representative with Sir Mark Sykes, now Secretary of the British War Cabinet, to define the interests of their countries and to go to Russia to include that country's views in their agreement. The negotiations for this Tripartite Agreement for the partition

24. Ibid., p.53.

25. Ibi.d, p.54.

of the Ottoman Empire²⁶ started as soon as general agreement had been reached with Hussein but neither Sir Henry McMahon nor Sherif Hussein were told of them.²⁷

Russia was accorded the occupation of Constantinople in the secret discussions with Foreign Secretary Sazanov, both the shores of the Bosphorus and some parts of the Turkish Armenia. France claimed Lebanon and Syria eastward to Mosul. Palestine did in fact have inhabitants and shrines of the Greek and Russian Orthodox and Armenian Churches, and Russia at first claimed a right to the area as their protector. This was countered by Sykes - Picot and the claim was withdrawn to the extent that Russia, in consultation with other allies, would only participate in deciding a form of international administration for Palestine.²⁸

The Sykes Picot Agreement provided for the Arab areas:

(a) an independent Arab state or a federation of Arab states in a part of what is now geographically known as Saudi Arabia and Yemen;

26. E.L. Woodward and Rohan Butler, Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, 1st Ser., Vol.4 (London, 1952). Hereinafter cited as Document 4 (four).

27. John & Hadawi, n.23, p.54.

28. Ibid., p.35.

(b) France in Lebanon and Syria and Britain in Iraq and Trans Jordan: 'to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as they may desire or as they may deem fit to establish after agreement with the Arab State or confederation of Arab States'.

(c) Parts of Palestine to be placed under 'an international administration of which the form will be decided upon after consultation with Russia, and after subsequent agreement with the other Allies and the representatives of the Sharif of Mecca.'²⁹

George Antonius an Arab authority on the subject has analysed the provisions of the document. He remarked:

What the Sykes - Picot Agreement did was, first, to cut up the Arab rectangle in such a manner as to place artificial obstacles in the way of unity.... Whatever gains the Allied Powers may have hoped to derive from the partition of that territory, it showed a lack of perspicacity on their part to have imagined that it could make for peaceful or a lasting settlement.

29. Documents 4, pp.241-251.

Antonius added:

Another peculiarity was that it provided for a topsy theory political structure in which the first were to come last and the last first. The inhabitants of Syria and Iraq were politically more developed and mature than the inhabitants of the inland regions. yet the agreement provided that the greater part of Syria and Iraq might be placed under a regime of direct foreign administration, while the inland regions were in any case to form independent Arab States. The absurdity of these provisions is particularly evident in the case of the regions destined to form the British sphere of influence.

He elaborated:

But more serious even than those errors of judgement was the breach of faith. The Agreement had been negotiated and concluded without the knowledge of the Sherif Hussein and it contained provisions which were in direct conflict with the terms of Sir Henry McMahon's compact with him. Worse still the fact of its conclusion was dishonestly concealed from him because it was realized that, were he to have been apprised, he would have unhesitatingly denounced his alliance with Great Britain.

Antonius has denounced the Agreement as a shocking document. He described, "it is only the product of greed at its worst, that is to say, of greed allied to suspicion and so leading to stupidity; it also stands out as a startling piece of double dealing."³⁰

30. Antonius, n.14, p.248.

The Agreement was in contradiction to the promises made to the Arabs. The Turks gave Hussein the details of the Agreement. Hussein could do nothing but formerly repudiate it and went on fighting. His faith in Great Britain remained unshaken.³¹

The tripartite agreement did not mention of concessions to Zionism in the future disposition of Palestine. However, before the departure of Sykes to Petrograd on 27 February 1916 for discussions with Sazanov, he was approached with a plan by Herbert Samuel, who was a member in the cabinet by virtue of being the President of the Local Government Board and was strongly sympathetic to Herzl's Zionism.³²

The plan put forward by Samuel was in the form of a memorandum. Sykes was prudent enough to commit it to memory and destroy. Sykes wrote to Samuel suggesting that if Belgium should assume the administration of Palestine it might be more acceptable to France as an alternative to the international administration which she wanted and the Zionists did not.³³ Of boundaries marked on a map attached

31. John & Hadawi, n.23, p.37.

32. Ibid.

33. Leonard Stein, The Balfour Declaration, (London, 1961), p.109.

to the memorandum he wrote, "By excluding Hebron and the east of the Jordan there is less to discuss with the Moslems, as the Mosque of Omar then becomes the only matter of vital importance to discuss with them and further does away with any contact with the Beduins, who never cross the river except on business. I imagine that the principal object of Zionism is the realization of the ideal of an existing centre of nationality rather than boundaries or extent of territory. The moment I return I will let you know how things stand at Petrograd".³⁴

Nevertheless, Sozanov in deliberations both with Sykes and the French ambassador, was careful not to commit himself as to the extent of the Russian interest in Palestine, but made it clear that Russia would have to insist that not only the holy places, but all towns and localities in which there were religious establishments belonging to the Orthodox Church, should be placed under international administration, with a guarantee of free access to the Mediterranean. Czarist Russia would not consent to a Zionist formula for Palestine; but its days were numbered.³⁵

34. Ibid., pp.233-234.

35. John & Hadawi, n.23, p.58.

The Sykes Picot agreement was a striking example of traditional diplomacy. It amounted to a calculated division in advance of territorial spoils of war. The analysis of its provisions and implications is significant. First it assumed that a spirit of close cooperation and consultation would continue to govern relations between the two powers in peacetime. The Agreement overlooked the conflicting interests of the two powers in area. Second, both parties appear to have held a limited definition of Arab sovereignty. They considered themselves "the protectors of the Arab State" and believed that any administrative systems which might be established could only be "as they desire and as they may think fit to arrange" with the Arab State. Yet they agreed to negotiate with the Arabs over the boundaries of the Arab State and were prepared to accept the King of Hejaz as an equal to be consulted together with the other allies in matters pertaining to that area reserved for international control. Third, the signatories were vague in their conception of the form which Arab rule would take. The acceptance of the agreement by His Majesty's Government was conditional provided that "the cooperation of the Arabs is secured, and that the Arabs fulfill the conditions and obtain the towns of Homs, Hama, Damascus, and Aleppo". It

was taken for granted that in any event the specific interests of all three parties could be adjusted reasonably and honorably once Turkey had been defeated.³⁶

This was the spirit, and out of lingering anxiety on account of war the British Government proceeded to take upon itself a further obligation in November 1917, this time to the Jewish people, in the form of Balfour Declaration.

Britain's Pledge to the Zionists; The Balfour Declaration: "From the British point of view, the secret war time agreements were dictated by the imperative necessity of gaining allies for the sake of winning the war. Russia, Italy, France and the Arabs were such allies. It was also believed in Great Britain that an understanding with the Zionists would produce a new ally in the form of world Jewry."³⁷

The spring of 1917 brought two dramatic developments which proved to be decisive for the success of the Zionist cause. The first was the revolution in Russia and the second was the US entry into the war. The Western allies were

36. Aaron, n.24, p.13.

37. George Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs, (London, 1982), p.82.

intensely interested in keeping Russia in the War and in preventing a separate peace treaty with Germany. Prime Minister Lloyd George as well as Lord Balfour believed that, in view of the prominence of the Jews in the Russian revolutionary movement, it was essential to acquire their goodwill by responding favourably to Zionist aspirations.³⁸ It was also important to obtain full co-operation and maximum effort from Britain's new ally, the United States. Here, too, it was believed, the Jews could render inestimable service. Moreover, an Allied pronouncement in favour of Zionism might win over the German Jewry to the Allied cause and, indirectly, help in producing internal disaffection in the Central Powers. While these were the practical reasons for Britain's decision to satisfy the Zionists, emotional motives on the part of some statesmen and a section of the Allied public opinion cannot be ruled out. "Christian charity toward a persecuted race, the Old Testament heritage so important in shaping the historical consciousness of some Protestant groups, and democratic liberalism added the glow of virtue to purely practical

38. Ibid.

calculation, or appealed to those for whom Realpolitik was not a sufficient inducement".³⁹

In their negotiations with Great Britain, the Zionists insisted on a British protectorate over Palestine as the best guarantee for the success of their programme. This amounted to the repudiation of that part of the Sykes Picot Agreement which provided for the internationalization of the Holy Land. This also amounted to another contradictory pledge. The British Government was not averse to accepting this Zionist proposal.⁴⁰

The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Balfour, in May 1917 paid visit to America. There he talked to Justice Brandies, a leading Zionist and a close adviser to President Wilson. The British Cabinet before committing itself desired to arrange for a formal endorsement by President Wilson of a pro-Zionist pronouncement. President Wilson not only supported Zionism but referred to himself as a Zionist in the course of discussions with other noted statesmen.⁴¹

39. Ibid., pp.83-84.

40. J.M.N. Jeffries, Palestine: The Reality (London, 1939), pp.141-44.

41. Reuben Fink, America and Palestine (New York, 1945), p.30.

However, Wilson was unwilling to make any endorsement at that time to pro Zionist policy, since the U.S.A. was not at war with Turkey. But following an official British enquiry addressed to Colonel House, Wilson on October 16, 1917 instructed him to approve the Pro-Zionist draft declaration proposed by the British government.

On November 2, 1917 following the acceptance by the British Cabinet of the major points of the draft submitted by the Zionists, Lord Balfour addressed the following letter to Rothschild:

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of the Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that

nothing shall be done, which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights

and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely,
Arthur James Balfour⁴²

By issuing the Balfour Declaration the British Government had committed itself even further to the emerging struggle for the Middle East, a struggle between Britain and France for regional pre-eminence.⁴³

Balfour and Zionism:

Balfour in 1917, in conversation with Harold Nicolson, explained his approach to the Jewish question in words like these: "The Jews are the most gifted race that mankind has seen since the Greeks of the fifth century. They have been exiled scattered and oppressed. If we can find them an asylum, a safe home in their native land then the full flowering of their genius will burst forth and propagate....

42. The letter was first published in the Jewish Chronicle in London, 9 Nov.1917.

43. Aaron, n.4, p.14, In contrast to its open circulation in Europe, the declaration was kept secret from the Arab Communities. A public reading of the declaration apparently did not take place in Palestine until April, 1920.

The submerged Jews of the ghettos of Eastern Europe will in Palestine find a new life and develop a new and powerful identity. Such, more or less, Nicolson recalls, were the exact words he used.⁴⁴

Balfour felt that the Christian religion and civilization owed to Judaism an immeasurable debt, shamefully ill-repaid. Asked at a private gathering a few months after the declaration about the real motives behind it, he replied, "Both the Prime Minister and myself have been influenced by a desire to give the Jewe their rightful place in the world; a great nation without a home is not right",⁴⁵ In a conversation recorded by Mr Dugdale⁴⁶ in 1926, he said, "As you know, I have always been a a Zionist, long before the War. Therefore, when the problems of nationalism... began to occupy my mind I was at the Foreign Office during the War. It is not likely that I would be less keen to satisfy Jewish nationalism than any of the others".⁴⁷

44. Sir Harold Nicolson in The Jerusalem Post, Weizmann Memorial Issue, (2 Nov. 1952). As quoted in Leonard Stein, n.33, p.157.

45. Leonard Stein, n.33, p.159.

46. 16 July 1926 Dugdale Papers as quoted in Leonard Stein, n.33, p.159.

In a memorandum written during the Peace Conference in 1919 he brushed aside the argument that this was not the normal case of a nation seeking the right to live its life on soil which it had already occupied.⁴⁸ He said, further

The four Great Powers are committed to Zionism. And Zionism, be it wrong or right, good or bad, is rooted in age long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land.⁴⁹

He told Mrs Dugdale in 1926, 'I was very sympathetic to Arab nationalism, too, though I always felt that, as far as Palestine went, Arab claims were infinitely weaker than those of the Jews.'⁵⁰

Zionism appealed to Balfour not only because he saw in it a national movement at least as worthy of respect as any other, but also because the unhappy history of the Jews seemed to him to give them a special claim to some measure of reparation. When he thought of the wrongs they had suffered at the hands of their persecutors, he was oppressed

48. Ibid.

49. Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939, (London, H.M. S.O.), IV, No.242, p.345 (11 August 1979).

50. Dugdale Papers, 16 July, 1926.

by a certain sense of guilt, and the passionate advocacy of Zionism is accounted for, at least in part, by the promptings of a troubled conscience. The idea of atonement is brought out strongly in the concluding passages of his speech in the Palestine debate in the House of Lords on 21 June 1922:⁵¹

Consider whether the whole culture of Europe, the whole religious organisation of Europe, has not from time to time proved itself guilty of great crimes against this race. Surely it is in order that we may send a message to every land where the Jewish race has been scattered, a message which will tell them that Christendom is not oblivious of their faith, is not unmindful of the service they have rendered to the great religions of the world... and we desire to the best of our ability, to give them the opportunity of developing in peace and quietness, under British rule, those great gifts which hitherto they have been compelled... only to bring to fruition in countries which know not their language and belong not to their race.... That is the aim which lay at the root of the policy I am trying to defend; and though it is defensible on every ground, that is the ground that chiefly moves me.

51. Stein, n.33, p.160.

The Balfour Declaration took shape in the interval between the Russian Revolution of March 1917 and the events immediately preceding the Bolshevik coup d'etat in the following November. Considering how Czarist Russia had treated its Jews, it is little surprising that it should have struck Balfour as an 'extraordinary phenomenon' that many Jews were active, and some were conspicuous, in the revolutionary movements. But Balfour's remark that those were the reasons "which make you and me such ardent Zionists" is significant, Zionism as perceived by Balfour would provide an antidote to the destructive mania of Jews in rebellion against their lot by offering them a healthy outlet for their frustrated energies. Balfour believed that the solution proposed by the Zionists organisation was the correct one. At the time of the Balfour Declaration these ideas were already coming to the fore, but, strongly as they appealed to Balfour in the light of the Russian Revolution they served only to fortify him in beliefs which on other grounds he had come to hold with firm and, indeed, passionate conviction.⁵²

53. Stein, n.33, p.162.

Declaration analysed:

For the purpose of analysis the text of the Balfour Declaration issued on 2 November 1917 may be divided into three parts.

The first is applicable to the Jews. It provided: 'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavour to facilitate the achievement of this object'.

The second affecting the rights and position of the Muslim and Christian inhabitants, stipulated: "It being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non Jewish communities in Palestine".

The third pointing towards the position of the Jews outside Palestine, ruled: "The rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country shall not be prejudiced by the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people. This latter protective clause gave the Jews the homeland of another people while safeguarding their own rights in their countries of origin".⁵³

53. Hadawi, n.11, p.19.

If one reads through the second safeguarding clause, one is able to discern that the Muslim and Christian inhabitants have been mentioned in such a way as to give an entirely false picture of their position in the country and their indubitable right to it. Although constituting, in 1917, 92% of the population, they were referred to as "the existing non-Jewish communities of Palestine". This tended to give the erroneous impression that they were an insignificant minority occupying a position subordinate to the Jews. This clause, by purporting to protect the rights of the Arabs as "the existing non-Jewish communities", in reality aimed at robbing them in due course of their right to the country as owners and inhabitants.⁵⁵

But leaving aside this deception and looking at the implication of the safeguarding clause, there is only one possible judgement that can be passed on it, namely, it was sufficient to nullify the rest of the Declaration. The British Government should have known that what the Zionists wanted would have constituted a disastrous encroachment on Arab rights in Palestine. In effect the British Government promised to help the Zionists achieve them, provided that nothing was done to enable them to achieve it!

55. Ibid.

Answering the criticism of the Declaration, Lord Balfour said, "Zionism may fail.... This is an adventure.... Are we never to have adventures ? Are we never to try new experiments ?"⁵⁶ Lord Sydenham replied that the Zionist experiment would fail,

But the harm done by dumping down an alien population upon an Arab country - Arab all round in the hinterland may never be remedied.... What we have done is, by concessions, not to the Jewish people but to a Zionist extreme section, to start a running sore in the East, and no one can tell how far that sore will extend."⁵⁷

British Reassurance to Arabs:

The British had concluded two secret agreements which conflicted with Arab aspirations, the Sykes Picot Agreement dividing Arab territories between Britain and France, and the Balfour Declaration signing away to the Jews Arab rights in Palestine. The Arab were unaware of it till the text of these two instruments were announced by the Bolsheviks on coming to power in 1917.⁵⁸ This was widely publicized by the

56. Hansard's Reports, House of Lords, 21 June 1922, p.997.

57. Ibid., p.1025.

58. Hadawi, n.11, p.22.

Turkish military commander as a sign of British betrayal of her pledges to the Arabs.

Nonetheless, the disclosure created great commotion in Arab circles and an explanation was requested by Sharif Hussein of Hejaz from the British Government. Assurances from the British Government came from time to time, however unconvincing, the Arabs continued to fight the Turks.

(1) The Hogarth Message of January 1918:

An explicit assurance was given that "The Jewish settlement in Palestine would only be allowed in so far as would be consistent with the political and economic freedom of the Arab population."⁵⁹

The phrase 'political and economic freedom of Arab population' is important since it is a marked departure from Balfour Declaration which guaranteed only the 'civil and religious rights of the Arab population. This was an assurance for Arab independence and sovereignty, which was ignored in Balfour Declaration.

(2) The Bassett Letter of 8 February 1918:

This letter was another reassurance that "His Majesty's Government and their allies remain steadfast to the policy

59. Antonious, n.14, p.268. See Also Aaron, n.4, p.16 and Lenz, n.37, p.82.

of helping any movement which aims at setting free those nations which are oppressed...." The letter went on to say, The Government of His Britannic Majesty repeats its previous promise in respect of the freedom and the emancipation of the Arab peoples."⁶⁰

(3) The British Declaration to the Seven of 16 June 1918:

Earlier British pledges to the Arabs were confirmed. The Declaration referred to the proclamations read in Baghdad and Jerusalem on March 19 and December 9, 1917, respectively and stated that these proclamations "define the policy of His Majesty's Government towards the inhabitants... which is that the future government... should be based upon the principle of the consent of the governed. This policy will always be that of His Majesty's Government."⁶¹

(4) the Anglo-French Declaration of 9 November 1918:

Anglo French intentions were more explicit in the last document of consequence to emerge from the war period. A Declaration was issued jointly by the two countries in -----

60. Jeffries, n.41, pp.216-217.

61. Antonius, n.14, pp.20-21.

November 1918 and was given wide publicity. After repeating the desire of France and Great Britain to foster the emancipation of the peoples in the Middle East and the establishment of freely-chosen national governments and administrations, it stated:

Far from wishing to impose on the populations of these regions any particular institutions, they are only concerned to ensure by their support and adequate assistance the regular working of governments and administrations freely chosen by the populations themselves. To secure impartial and equal justice for all, to facilitate the economic development of the country..., to favour the diffusion of education, to put an end to discussions.... Such is the policy which the two Allied Governments uphold in the liberated territories.⁶²

With these assurances and affirmations, the Arab War against the Turks went on with greater vigour and determination.⁶³

62. Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th Series, 145:36.

63. Hadawi, n.11, p.21.

BRITAIN AND THE MANDATE

With the signing of the Armistice of Mudros by the Entente Powers and Turkey on 30 October 1918, fighting ceased in the Middle East.⁶⁴ On 30 January 1919, the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference decided that the conquered Arab provinces, including Palestine, were not to be restored to Turkish rule.⁶⁵ Palestine remained under British military administration until 1920, when a civil administration was set up which continued until the British Government obtained on 24 July 1922 a formal mandate from the Council of the League of Nations to administer the country.⁶⁶ A writer has commented on the nature of the Mandatory system as follows:

"To circumvent the fulfillment of their promises of Arab independence and to implement the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, the Allied Powers devised what became known as the Mandate system. This turned out to be the disguised colonialism."⁶⁷

64. Aaron, n.4, p.17.

65. Hadawi, n.11, p.55.

66. Henry Catlan, Palestine and International Law, (London, 1973), p.15.

67. Hadawi, n.11, p.55.

The Palestine Mandate:

The concept of international mandates was inspired by the principles, propounded by President Wilson and leaders of the Russian Revolution, that war settlements at the end of the First World War should not involve any annexations but should be based upon the principle of self-determination of peoples.⁶⁸ The first concrete proposal of the concept was made by General Smuts as part of a project for a League of Nations which he published in December 1918 on the eve of the Peace Conference.⁶⁹

The concept of the mandate was accepted and its basic objectives laid down in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations which was adopted on 25 April 1919. Article 22 indicated the territories which would be subjected to Mandates. There were:

- (a) territories detached from the Turkish Empire,
- (b) certain territories in Central Africa,
- (c) territories in South - West Africa and certain of the South Pacific Islands.

68. Stott, Official Statements of War Aims and Peace Proposals, pp.188, 265 and 309 (Washington, 1921). As cited in Cattani, n.67, p.15.

69. See General Smuts, The League of Nations (London, 1918).

The character of the Mandate and the Mandatory Powers would differ in each of these three classes of territories. The least onerous were the Mandates to be granted in respect of territories detached from the Turkish Empire. As regards these territories, Article 22 provided:

"Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wish of these communities must be principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory."

However, Article 22, did not designate the Mandatory Powers. This was done later by the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers.

Palestine, as one of the territories detached from the Turkish Empire, was one of the countries whose independence was thus provisionally recognized, "subject to the rendering of administration advice and assistance by a Mandatory." On 25 April 1920 at San Remo the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers decided to allocate the Mandate over Palestine to

Great Britain. But the terms of the Mandate were yet to be settled.⁷⁰

'One of the most extraordinary aspects of the Palestine Mandate is that its terms were proposed by a foreign body which harboured political ambitions in respect of the country concerned.⁷¹ In its memorandum dated 3 February 1919, submitted by the World Zionist Organisation to the Peace Conference at Paris, this body outlined its wishes and desiderata with respect to the future of Palestine. It is important to note that "many of the suggestions of the memorandum found their way, after revision, into a draft Mandate for Palestine formulated by the Zionist Organisation and circulated at the end of March 1919... and, after further revision, into the Mandatory instrument approved by the Council of the League of Nations".⁷² The terms of the Mandate over Palestine were settled by the British Government "in consultation with Zionist representative's".⁷³

70. See W.T. Mallison & Sally V. Mallison, The Palestine Problem in International Law and Order (London, 1986), pp.13-68.

71. Cattani, n.67, p.16.

72. J.C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, Vol. II (New York, 1956), p.45.

73. H.W.V. Temperley, History of the Peace Conference of Paris, Vol. VI, p.174.

The Arabs of Palestine, who were the party immediately concerned were not even consulted. The Palestine Mandate was approved by the Council of the League of Nations substantially in the terms proposed by the Zionist Organisation.⁷⁴

The Mandate had two principle objectives:

The first objective was to give effect to Article 22 of the Covenant. The first recital in its preamble stated:

"Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have agreed, for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, to entrust to a Mandatory selected by the said Powers the administration of the territory of Palestine....."

In fulfillment of this objective Article 2 of the Mandate provided:

"The Mandatory shall be responsible for... the development of self governing institutions...."

The second objective was to put into effect the Balfour Declaration, and facilitate Jewish immigration. The second recital in the preamble stated:

74. Cattar, n.67, p.16.

"Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have also agreed that the mandatory should be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on 2 November 1917, by the Government of His Britannic Majesty, and adopted by the said Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country; and

Whereas recognition has thereby been given to the historical connexion of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country...."

To fulfill this objective Article 2 provided:

"The mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home, as laid down in the preamble...."

Armed with the Mandate, using the might of British empire and seconded by the forces of Zionism, the British Government implemented the Balfour Declaration in Palestine

against the will and despite the opposition of its original inhabitants.⁷⁵

The foul play was aggravated by the way Mandate was implemented:

First, the British Government as Mandatory did not take into account the tenuous safeguards laid down in favour of the original inhabitants of Palestine both in the Balfour Declaration and in the Mandate itself. The Balfour Declaration had provided that "nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non Jewish communities in Palestine". The Mandate had provided that in facilitating Jewish immigration into Palestine, the Administration should ensure that "the rights and position of other section of the population are not prejudiced " (Article 6). The Mandate was implemented without taking into consideration those safeguards.⁷⁶

Second, Article 2 of the Mandate provided that the Mandatory was responsible for developing self-governing institutions. There was no trace of any such institutions at

75. Ibid., n.67, p.17.

76. Ibid., p.18. See also Hadawi, n.11, pp.59-60.

any time during the Mandate. Palestine was governed and administered from beginning to end as if it were a colonial possession. A half hearted attempt was made by the British Government in 1922 to grant some semblance of autonomy to the people of Palestine in the form of a Legislative Council. This attempt, however, failed because of Arab opposition to the proposed measure on the grounds that it did not recognize majority rule, and because of a Jewish opposition to the grant of self government to Palestine in any form so long as they were a minority.⁷⁷

British Civil Administration in Palestine:

A civil administration in Palestine was established on 1 July 1920. The consortium of British Officers which arrived in the country included British Zionist Jews who were placed in key position. Some of these were Herbert Samuel, one of the framers of the Balfour Declaration as High Commissioner; Norman Bantiwich, Attorney General and chief legislator of Palestine laws, Albert Hyamson, Director of Immigration, and Max Nurock, Principal Assistant Secretary to the Government with access to all matters pertaining to policy in Palestine.

77. Ibid., p.18.

One of the early actions of this consortium was to enact the first immigration ordinance on 26 August 1920, fixing a quota of 16,500 immigrant Jews for the first year.⁷⁸

Other legislation followed, all were aimed to facilitate the "Jewish national home" policy. It seemed as if the British Government had no obligations to the Arab section of the community. Significant among these, next to the Immigration Law, were laws affecting land disposition, registration and settlements; this was being done to hasten Jewish acquisition of Arab land. One of these laws - disguised as a law to protect cultivators against eviction by their land lords had the opposite effect. This was because almost all the large tracts of land were owned by absentee land - owners living in Lebanon and Syria. Whereas relations between landlord and tenant had untill then been on the best of terms the new law gave the tenant the impression which was also encouraged by Jewish land brokers that he no longer needed to pay his rentals since the law gave him certain 'tenancy rights' and protected him against

78. Hadawi, n.11, p.58.

eviction. Even 'squalors' were soon able to establish 'tenancy rights' under certain ambiguously worded provisions of the law. The landlord, placed in the unenviable position of owning land but getting hardly anything out of it, and hardened with taxation beyond his means, found him self in a critical situation. Here is where the Jewish land broker stepped in and offered to buy the land and rid the landlord of his problems. This resulted in massive purchase of lands by the Jews and appalling displacement of the agricultural Arab families. Other measures favouring Jews were the granting to Jewish companies of concessions over state lands and the natural resources of the country, such as irrigation, electricity and the extraction of potash and other minerals from the Dead Sea.

The Arab majority was denied the right of controlling its destiny while it had to change its policy in deference to the will of the minority, or untill the minority had itself become a majority.⁷⁹

79. Hadawi, n.11, pp.59-60.

The Arab Opposition:

Arab opposition to the Mandate and the policy of the Balfour Declaration remained steadfast and unrelenting throughout the period of the Mandate.

When appeals, protests, arguments, demonstrations and strikes failed to move the British Government to fulfill its pledges to the Arabs and follow a policy of justice and equity, the Palestine Arabs resorted from time to time to violence. The first violent expression of Arab feeling occurred on Easter Sunday in April 1920; the second in May 1921; the third in August 1929; and between 1926, and 1939, an all out rebellion broke out which was preceded by an unprecedented six months strike.⁸⁰

Four principal commissions of inquiry were appointed directly as a result of the riots.

These commissions were:

The Palin Commission of 1920.

The Haycraft Commission of 1921.

The Shaw Commission of 1930

The Royal (Peel) Commission of 1937.⁸¹

⁸⁰. Ibid., p.60.

⁸¹. See Richard N. Verdery, Arab "Disturbances" and the Commissions of Inquiry' in Abu-lughod, The Transformation of Palestine Ed., (Evenston, 1971), pp.275-303.

The findings of these commissions were invariably the same, namely,

(a) Arab disappointment at the non-fulfillment of the promises of independence which had been given them during the First World War;

(b) Arab belief that the Balfour Declaration implied a denial of the right of self-determination and their fear that the establishment of 'a national home for the Jews' in Palestine will lead to their ultimate dispossession of their homes and homeland.

The Zionists made no secret of their intentions, for as early as 1921, Dr. Eder, a member of the Zionist Commissions, "boldly told the Court of Inquiry' that "there can be only one National Home in Palestine, and that a Jewish one, and no equality in the partnership between Jews and Arabs, but a Jewish preponderance as soon as the number of the race are sufficiently increased."⁸²

British 'Statements of Policy':

The commissions of enquiry which were appointed to establish the causes for the riots were each followed by the

82. William Ziff, The Rape of Palestine, (New York, 1938), p.171.

issue of a 'Statement of Policy', each commission tried to interpret the meaning of 'a national home'.

Churchill Memorandum:

The British Governments' first attempt at a definitive public statement of policy in Palestine, the Churchill Memorandum was issued on 3 June 1922.⁸³ 'The British Government' in this instance was virtually the same small power clique around Lloyd George which had been responsible for the Balfour Declaration. Now their statement of policy was tempered by the advice of some permanent British officials in the Foreign and Colonial Offices. This was due to the perspective improved by the absence of the war factor in their analysis. The terms of the draft Mandate were being considered under lower pressure. A deviation from earlier Zionist formula which included the establishment of a Jewish state or commonwealth in Palestine, was occurring.⁸⁴

The 'Memorandum' offered what was considered to be a forward step in the development of self governing

83. Cmd. 1700, British Statement of Policy.

84. John, Hadawi, n.23, pp.181-82.

institutions by a proposal to establish a legislative council containing a large number of members to be elected on a wide franchise. The British promise had been to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine; 'the terms of the Declaration....do not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish national home, nor was there anything in it to warrant the suggestion that Palestine was destined to become 'as Jewish as England is English'. Moreover, 'His Majesty's' Government regard any such expectation as impracticable and have no such aim in view'.⁸⁵

The principal points were:

(1) His Majesties' Government re-affirmed the Balfour Declaration.

(2) A Jewish national home would be founded in Palestine as of right and not of sufferance, but there would be no imposition of a Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a whole.

(3) Nor did His Majesty's Government contemplate the disappearance or subordination of the Arab population, language or culture.

85. Ibid.

(4) The status of all citizens of Palestine should be Palestinian. No section of the population would have any other status in the eyes of the law.

(5) His Majesty's Government intended to foster the establishment of a full measure of self government in Palestine, and as the next step, a legislative council with a majority of elected members would be set-up immediately.

(6) The special position of the Zionist Executive did not entitle it to share in any degree in the government of the country.

(7) Immigration would not exceed the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals.

(8) A committee of the elected members of the legislative council would confer with the administration.

(9) Any religious community or considerable section of the population claiming that the terms of the Mandate are not being fulfilled.⁸⁶

Although the White Paper repudiated the idea of Jewish domination over the Arabs, it established a principle for

86. Ibid., pp.182-83.

the regulation of immigration which would in time make such domination possible if not inevitable. Moreover, it was more than a statement of formal principles and did not take into account one of the essential facts of the situation. The British Government had laid down a general policy of a dual obligation. The Zionists always better organized, through the privileged status of the Jewish Agency and through many other maneuverings could tilt the balance in their favour. The Arabs yet hoped that a change of British policy would occur and ensure justice to them.

On 24 July 1922 the Mandate for Palestine was approved by the Council of the League of Nations, to come into force officially on 22 December 1923.⁸⁷ A last attempt by the Vatican to block its approval failed. The Papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Gasparri, submitted a memorandum dated 15 May 1922 severely criticizing the Mandate articles designed to give effect to the Balfour Declaration, declaring that they were incompatible with the Covenant of the League of Nations.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, the 'Churchill Memorandum' established the support of the coalition government for the Balfour

87. Cmd. 1785, British Parliamentary Papers, 1922.

88. John & Hadawi, n.23, p.186.

Declaration and the Palestine Mandate at the expense of the wartime pledge to the Arabs and paved the way for the acceptance of the Mandate by the League, and established the right of Zionists to demand British administrative, and if necessary, military aid in colonizing Palestine.

Passfield White Paper:

The riots of 1929 were followed by yet another pronouncement. This is in form of a White Paper which became known as the 'Pass-field Memorandum'. This memorandum is important and is reproduced here:

Many of the misunderstandings which have unhappily arisen on both sides appear to be the result of a failure to appreciate the nature of the duty imposed upon His Majesty's Government by the terms of the Mandate. The next point therefore which His Majesty's Government feel it necessary to emphasize, in the strongest manner possible, is that in the words of the Prime Minister's statement in the House of Commons on the 3rd April last, 'a double undertaking is involved, to the Jewish people on the one hand and to the non-Jewish population on the other'".

The statement continued:

These points are emphasized because claims have been made on behalf of the Jewish Agency to a position in regard to the general administration of the country which His Majesty's Government cannot but regard as going far beyond the clear intention of the Mandate. Moreover, attempts have been made to argue, in support of Zionist claims that the principal feature of the Mandate's the passages regarding the Jewish national home, and that the passages designed to safeguard the rights of the non Jewish community are merely secondary considerations, qualifying, to some extent, what is claimed to be the primary object for which the Mandate has been framed.

This is a conception which H.M.G. have always regarded as totally erroneous. However, difficult the task may, it would in their view, be impossible, consistently with the plain intention of the Mandate, to attempt to solve the problem by subordinating one of these obligations to the other. The British accredited representative, when appearing before the Permanent Mandates Commission on the 9th June last, endeavoured to make clear the attitude of H.M.G. towards the difficulties inherent in the Mandate. In commenting on his statements in their report to the Council the Permanent Mandates Commission made the following important pronouncement:

'From all these statements, two assertions emerge, which should be emphasized:

(1) That the obligations laid down by the Mandate in regard to the two sections of the population are of equal weight;

(2) That the two obligations imposed on the Mandatory are in no sense irreconcilable.

"The Mandate Commission has no objection to rise to these two assertions which, in its view, accurately express what it conceives to be the essence on the Mandate for Palestine and ensure its future.'"89

The Labour Government became immediately involved in a storm of anger from Zionist Jews throughout the world. But Arabs said that Britain had at last recognized their rights.⁹⁰ The American Jewish Committee stated that the United Kingdom's 'Statement of policy' was a repudiation of pledges to the Jews.⁹¹ Weizman said that he would make an appeal to the League of Nations against it.⁹² The 'New York

89. Cmd. 3692 'The Passfield White Paper', Dated October 1930.

90. New York Times, 25 October 1930, 7:4. As cited in John & Hadawu, n.23, p.218.

91. Ibid., 21 October 1930.

92. Ibid., 22 October, 1930.

Times' also published an alleged 'revelation' from a friend of MacDonald that there had been a Cabinet fight before the 'Statement' was published, and that Passfield had forced the policy on the Cabinet.⁹³ "This was possibly a canard put out to weaken Passfield and the Government's policy or to provide a convenient let-out for MacDonald if criticism became too hot."⁹⁴

On account of the pressure at home and looming threat of financial reprisals from the United States, Romsay MacDonald backed down'. According to his colleague Herbert Morrison, he had already shown 'evidence of that remote and defensive attitude to those around him which in the end left him with virtually no friends in the real sense of the word', and sometimes gave the impression of 'an objectionable evasiveness' and a 'shilly-shallying which was to prove so disastrous to his reputation".⁹⁵

Passfield defended his policy, denying that Palestine was barred to Jews. He said that the suspension of

93. Ibid., 26 October, 1930.

94. John & Hadawi, n.23, p.219.

94. The Sunday Times, (London), 6 March 1930. As cited in John & Hadawi, n.23, p.232.

immigration was only contingent on unemployment in Palestine. Internationally he was supported by Judges Loefgren, Chairman of the League of Nations' Waiting Wall Commission, who defended British Policy as a compromise between the promises made to the Arabs and the Jews.⁹⁶

On 14 November 30 it was announced that 'doubts have been expressed as to the compatibility of some passages of the White Paper of October with certain articles of the Palestine Mandate, and other passages having proved liable to misunderstanding', MacDonald had invited members of the Jewish Agency to confer on these matter'.⁹⁷

MacDonald "Black Letter":

The Prime Minister wrote a letter to Weizman "clarifying" the White Paper for him but in reality capitulating to the pressures which the Jewish Zionists and their more politically powerful gentile supporters in the British Parliament had brought to bear.⁹⁸ The letter to Dr. Weizmann is referred by Arabs as 'Black Letter'. The

96. New York Times, 6 November 1930. As cited in John & Hadawi, n.23, pp.232-33.

97. John Hadawi, n.2, p.233.

98. Richard N. Verdery, n.82, p.293.

difference in tone between the White Paper of 1930 and the "Black Letter" of 1931, is perhaps the most important contrast between the two documents. 'Whereas the Passfield White Paper and the Commission's reports that preceded it had conceived matters in terms of inhabitants of Palestine both Arab and Jewish, the MacDonald letter reaffirmed that the Mandate for Palestine reflected an obligation to the Jews of the world as a whole, not merely to those resident in, or currently eager to emigrate to, Palestine'.⁹⁹ The 'Black Letter' diluted the government strictures upon Zionist demand, Jewish Labour for Jewish enterprises and permitted further acquisition of land in Palestine by Jews or Jewish agencies:

The Labour Government, like its predecessors adhered to the unsuccessful policy of attempted compromise between the aims of Arab nationalism and Zionism.... The Passfield Paper and the MacDonald letter were particularly unfortunate applications of the general British Policy, for they convinced first the Arabs and then the Jews that sufficient agitation and pressure could alter the intentions of the Mandatory. The whole

99. Ibid.

philosophy of compromise was at fault. The effort of the London government to the both pro-Arab and pro-Zionist within the limited confines of the HolyLand was brought with danger alike to the Arabs, the Jews and the British.¹⁰⁰

Jewish sources now describe the Ramsay MacDonald letter as in fact cancelling the Passfield White Paper of 1930. Weizmann summarizes the significance of the letter in the following words:

"....it was under MacDonalds' letter to me that the change came about in the Government's attitude, and in the attitude of the Palestine Administration, which enabled us to make the magnificent gains of the ensuing years. It was under MacDonald's letter the Jewish immigration into Palestine was permitted to reach figures like forty thousand after 1934 and sixty two thousand for 1935..."¹⁰¹

The Arabs regarded it as plain proof of the power which world Jewry could exercise in London and their confidence in British administration was shaken.

MacDonald White Paper: Plagued with unrest in Palestine and continued Arab rebellion (1936-1939) the British Government,

100. Hanna, British Policy, p.108. As quoted in Richard N. Verdery, n.82, pp.293-94.

101. Chaim Weizmann, Trial and Error, (London, 1950), p.335.

on 17 May 1939, issued yet another but final 'Statement of Policy' which became known as 'The MacDonald White Paper. There was a direct attempt by Chaim Weizmann to urge Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain not to publish it.¹⁰² The Statement referred to the terms of the Mandate and it stated, "the Royal Commission and previous Commission of Enquiry have drawn attention to the ambiguity of certain expressions in the Mandate, such as the expression 'a national home for the Jewish people', and they have found in this ambiguity and the resulting uncertainty as to the objectives of policy a fundamental cause of unrest and hostility between Arabs and Jews".¹⁰³ The Government was convinced that, in the interests of peace and well being of the whole people of Palestine, a clear definition of policy and objectives was essential. Consequently, the British Government declared that neither their undertakings to the Jews nor the national interests of Britain warranted that they should continue to develop the Jewish beyond already reached. The Government therefore decided;

1. That the Jewish National Home as envisaged in the Balfour Declaration and in previous statements of British policy had been established;

102. Ibid., p.410.

103. As cited in John & Hadawi, n.23, p.315.

2. That to develop it further against Arab wishes would be a violation of Britain's undertakings to the Arabs and that such a policy could only be carried out by the use of un-justifiable force;
3. That, therefore, after admission of a final quota of 75,000 more Jewish immigrants over a period of five years, Jewish immigration should stop.
4. That during this period of five years a restriction should be placed on the acquisition of further land in Palestine by the Jews; and
5. That at the end of the period of five years, self governing institutions should be set up in the country.¹⁰⁴

Reaction of the Arabs and Zionists to the White Paper:

Arab reaction to the White Paper of 1939 was mixed. A certain section of the population was willing to accept it but doubted the sincerity of the British Government; the other decided to reject it as not meeting fully the aspirations of the Palestine Arabs which was the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate and the granting of independence to the country.

104. Great Britain, Colonial Office, Palestine Partition Commission, Statement of Policy (Parliamentary Papers, Cmd. 6019, London, 1939) (MacDonald White Paper), p.4.

'The Arab Higher Committee led by the Mufti from Beirut, rejected the terms of the White Paper but on 29 May 1939 the National Defence Party announced its readiness to cooperate with Britain in giving effect to them.'¹⁰⁵

The Zionists unanimously condemned the proposals of the 'MacDonald White Paper'. Their reaction was immediate. In Palestine, 'Dr. Herzog, the Chief Rabbi, stood in the pulpit of the great Yeshurim Synagogue of Jerusalem and before the weeping congregation tore up a copy of the White Paper to pieces. On 17 May 1939, the Palestine Broadcasting Service transmission wires were cut and the Palestine Broadcasting studios bombed, so that the official announcement of the British Government's new policy could not be immediately broadcast to the country. The next day the head quarters offices of the Administration's Department of Migration were set on fire, and the Government offices at Haifa and Tel Aviv were sacked by crowds bent on destroying every document of illegal immigration.'¹⁰⁶

This was the beginning of the Jewish rebellion in Palestine which was to partition Palestine and drive the

¹⁰⁵. John & Hadawi, n.23, p.321.

¹⁰⁶. Ibid., p.320.

British out of the country. It was synchronized with Zionist political action in many countries. Even in Rumania, where a pro Nazi government was said to be in power, the protests of the Rumanian Zionist organisation against Britain and its proposed Palestine policy made headlines.¹⁰⁷

The House of Commons debated the White Paper on 22 May 1939. The policy was approved by 268 votes against 179. A motion supported by Lloyd George and Winston Churchill, that as the proposals of His Majesty's Government relating to Palestine, as set out in Command Paper No.6019, are inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the Mandate and not calculated to secure the peaceful and prosperous development of political, this House is of the opinion that Parliament should not be committed pending the examination of these proposals by the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations', was defeated.¹⁰⁸ On 23 May the House of Lords, after debate, approved the policy without a division.¹⁰⁹

107. New York Times, 22 May 1939. As cited in John & Hadawi, n.23, p.321.

108. Hansard Vol. 347, Cols. 1938-2056 and 2129-2190. As cited in John & Hadawi, n.23, p.321.

109. Hansard vol. 347, Cols. 81-143. As cited in John & Hadawi, n.23, p.321.

Much water had flown down the river between 1930, when the Passfield White Paper policy had been rejected in the House of Commons, and 1939, the acceptance of a policy to which Zionists were violently opposed. Weizmann wrote in his autobiography: "I tried to find an answer to a question which was to occupy me for the remainder of my life: Why was it, a completely invariable rule that politicians who were enthusiastic of the Jewish home land during elections forget it completely if they were returned to power."¹¹⁰ It can be argued that what matter was the information available to the men in government, compared with the propaganda which they relied on when out of office. This was not only true of Palestine. The fact seems to be that there was now a greater knowledge in England of the Near and Middle East among those influential in making policy. Diplomatic representation of Arabs to London from time to time had changed the common misconception of Arab leaders as romantic, semi barbarous sheikhs. About sixty members of parliament under the Chairmanship of Lord Whiterton, who had been on Allenby's staff in 1918, and Colonel Clifton Brown, later Speaker of the House, had formed an informal group who believed in the merits of Arab case. The first book in England to carry the

110. Weizmann, n.102, pp.437-438.

Arab point of view, together with accounts of British wartime promises to the Arabs, had been published in 1938, and this, The Arab Awakening by George Antonius, 'had probably done much to influence British opinion toward Arab nationalism.

The MacDonald White Paper, which was to be British policy in Palestine for the duration of the war, was an attempt to keep Arab national feeling temporarily placated, if did not actually satisfy them. The Zionists were embittered at its terms. But they had no choice except to support the British government against Hitler. This was a must, if the Jewish national home, after the war, had to grow into a Jewish state.

With the issuance of the 1939 MacDonald White Paper, the history of inter-war Palestine came to an end. The British administration and the government in London prepared for the war and were too preoccupied to send investigatory commissions. The Palestinian Jews and the larger Zionist community bowed to the inevitable restriction on immigration for the duration of the war although clandestine immigration continued. The Palestinian Arabs, their peasants' revolt spent, and their titular leader a

fugitive, relapsed into a political quiescence. The struggle between the two communities on Palestinian soil subsided beneath the surface for the time being.¹¹¹

On the outbreak of World War II, both Arabs and Zionists decided not to embarrass the British Government and to cease all acts of violence. As attested by the Palestine Government, "The Arabs of of Palestine demonstrated their support of Democracy at the outbreak of war, and there were spontaneous appeals in the Arab press to Arabs to rally to the side of Great Britain and set aside local issues; acts of terrorism were roundly condemned".¹¹² The Arab notables caused on the High Commission to assure him of their loyalty.¹¹³

There was an unanimous agreement among the Jews of Palestine to put aside their opposition to British policy in Palestine and demonstrate their loyalty to the cause of the democracies. Jewish terrorist acts ceased. The Jewish agency issued an appeal calling on all Jews in Palestine to close

111. Richard N. Verdery, n.82, pp.302-3.

112. Palestine : A Survey of Palestine 1945-1946, p.57.

113. R.I.I.A., Great Britain and Palestine 1915-1945 (N.Y. as London, 1946), p.128.

their ranks and offer their full assistance to Britain. This was not without a purpose.¹¹⁴

As the war progressed British dilemma became more acute. Hitler's final solution to the Jewish problem became known. For the British government it became unthinkable and impolitic not to allow Jewish immigration into Palestine at the end of the time prescribed by the 1939 White Paper, that is March 1944. The Zionists also forced the pace. They adopted a new program in May 1942 that called for the establishment after the war of a Jewish state in Palestine that would stretch from the river Jordan to the Mediterranean (the Biltmore programme). The presence in the United States of a politically influential Jewish community, which in 1943 adopted the Baltimore programme, made it difficult for London to pursue any policy that might be construed as anti-Zionist.¹¹⁵

The Arab world achieved greater political cohesion during the course of the war, culminating in the foundation of the Arab League, in Cairo, in March 1945. The League

114. Hadawi, n.11, p.65.

115. Michael J. Cohen, Palestine and the Great Powers 1945-1948, (New Jersey, 1982), p.8.

referred to the terms of the 1939 White Paper as the "natural rights" of the Palestinian Arabs. This was notwithstanding the fact that the Palestinian's own leaders had rejected that document in 1939, and Amin-el-Husayni had collaborated with the Nazis since 1941.¹¹⁶

Although in 1944 a British Cabinet Committee had, under Churchill's direction again proposed the eventual partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab States the scheduled discussion in the full cabinet had been put off following the assassination in Cairo of the British Minister of State, Lord Moyne. Churchill never returned to the Zionist cause, and the Palestine problem was inherited by the labour government.¹¹⁷

Churchill and Zionism:

Winston Churchill may be counted among those select few who became legend in their own life time. In the pantheon of Zionist heroes, few gentiles enjoyed such a privileged position as Churchill.

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid., pp.8-9.

It would be a mistake to think that Churchill was ever a consistent, convinced supporter of Zionism. It goes without saying that he was never ideologically committed, in the same way as Herzl's adherents were, to the renaissance of the Jewish nation in Palestine, as the unique solution to the 'the Jewish Problem'. The periods when Churchill concerned himself directly with Jewish problems were relatively brief. These were interspersed with far longer spans when he had no official contact whatever. In 1934, he paid a private visit to Palestine, during the course of Middle East tour. He stayed overnight in Jerusalem, but did not apparently meet with any Zionist representative.¹¹⁸

Churchill concerned himself on the Jewish problem only when it was interwoven with his own personal political fortunes or with British imperial interests. As Secretary of State for War, and then for the colonies after the war, Churchill was preoccupied with securing economy and retrenchment in West Asia. "Repeatedly by, but in vain, he urged retreat and withdrawal from the Middle Eastern Mandate, Palestine and Mesopotamia".¹¹⁹

118. Michael J. Cohen, Churchill and the Jews (London, 1985), p.xvi.

119. Ibid.

Balfour Declaration was disowned by Churchill. However it was important to him in two important aspects. First, Churchill was convinced that the Declaration had been instrumental in mobilizing powerful Jewish support for the Allied cause especially in the United States, whose entry into the war, Churchill believed, was secured partly by Zionist pressure. This belief for him was enduring and it played a pivotal role in Churchill's support for Zionism during World War II, prior to the American entry, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December, 1941. Second, Churchill did for a time believe that Zionism might provide the antidote to what he believed was Jew - inspired Bolshevism. Jewish resources and energy might be channeled usefully into building up a British - oriented protectorate in Palestine. But Churchill took little or no account of the rise of Arab nationalism after World War II.

The rise of Nazism during the mid and late 1930s threatened, and eventually shattered, the political order established by the victors of World War I. The threat to old order became a dominant theme during the late 1930s. Hitler gave the 'Jewish problem' a tragic twist and around in Churchill a unique personal commitment never interested at other junctures of his political career. Nonetheless the

Jewish suffering's took a very clear second priority during World War II. the first being the imperial interest.¹²⁰

In May 1939, the Chamberlain Government issued a new White Paper. Churchill condemned the new policy in the House of Commons as a breach of faith, the 'destruction of the Balfour Declaration'. In this attack there was more than a suspicion of political opportunism in this particular attack. The Palestine White Paper provided Churchill with yet another occasion to express his anti - appeasement message. Churchill had seized on the Zionist cause as early as in 1937 when, contrary to the Zionists' own wishes he had attacked the Peel partition plan as a betrayal of Britain's commitments under the Mandate.

As war-time Prime Minister, Churchill reminded his colleagues repeatedly that he did not consider himself bound by the 1939 policy but adhered to 'his own' White Paper of 1922. This policy had stipulated that the Jews were in Palestine 'as of right, and not an sufferance'. and that they immigrate freely subject only to the economic absorbing capacity of Palestine. Yet a solution to 'the

120. Ibid., p.xvii.

Jewish Problem', in all its different aspects, was in fact deferred by Churchill until after the War.¹²¹

As Prime Minister, Churchill had taken a pro - Zionist stand on every issue connected with Palestine during the War - from the Land Transfers Bill promulgated in February 1940, to the various schemes for a Jewish fighting force, to the renewed discussion of partition itself from 1943. Yet apart from his success in pushing through the decision to raise a Jewish brigade in September 1944, Churchill did not press to a positive conclusion any pro-Zionist measure. Neither did he seriously contemplate the dismissal of any cabinet appointee because of differences over Zionism.¹²²

During the war, Churchills' solemn commitments to the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann had retained for Britain the support of the moderate Zionists. This was crucial since the support of moderate Zionists led by Weizmann had blunted the anti-British campaigns waged by some sections of American Jewry. Yet Churchill ended his tenure "with the White Paper unabrogated, no commitment on record and Weizmann left high and dry, standing before the Jewish people baffled, enraged,

121. Ibid., p.xviii.

122. Michael J.Cohen, "Direction of Policy in Palestine, 1936-1945", Middle Eastern Studies, Vol.11/3, October 1975, pp.237-261.

undermined and empty-handed".¹²³ It is not easy to reconcile all this with the accepted view of Churchill as a pro-Zionist.

Churchill's war memoirs hint at controversies between him and his colleagues regarding the Holocaust, both before and after the massacre became generally known. They saw he was trying to live up to his sympathies for the Jewish people. But no contemporary statement of his can be found either to justify his stand or to explain his attitude towards suffering European Jewry.¹²⁴

After 1944, Jewish terrorism seems to have alienated Churchill from Zionism permanently. The assassination of Lord Moyne a close friend of his and the British Minister of State, resident in the Middle East not only brought a strong warning from him in the House of Commons to the Zionist movement as a whole, but caused him also to shelve the new partition scheme which had already been placed on the Cabinet's agenda.¹²⁵

123. Abba Eban, "Tragedy and Triumph" in Chaim Weizmann, a Biography by several hands, ed. M. Weisgal and J. Carmichael, (London, 1962), p.278.

124. Oskar K. Rabino Wiesz, Winston Churchill on Jewish Problems (London, 1956), pp.119 ff.

125. Michael J. Cohen, Palestine: Retreat from the Mandate (London, New York, 1978), pp.179-190.

On August 1, 1946, nine days after the King David Hotel tragedy Churchill endorsed the Labour Party doctrine which divorced Palestine from the Jewish refugee problem: "No one can imagine that there is room in Palestine for the great masses of Jews who wish to leave Europe, or that they could be absorbed in any period which it is now useful to contemplate". Referring to the King David Hotel explosion, he added: "It is perfectly clear that Jewish warfare directed against the British in political will if protracted, automatically release us from all obligations to persevere, as well as destroy the inclination to make further efforts in British hearts".¹²⁶

Labour, Bevin and Palestine Problem:

On July 26, 1945 the Labour Party was for the first time in its history voted into office with a commanding majority over its opponents. In a landslide victory, the party gained 393 seats as against 213 won by the Conservatives and their supporters. The Liberal Party's representation was reduced from 21 to 12 seats. The swing from Conservative to the left on such a scale was witnessed only twice before in British parliamentary history, in 1832 and in 1906.¹²⁷

126. Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Vol. 426, cols. 1253-1257.

127. Cohen, n.115, p.20.

"In all of the complexity of Middle Eastern issues facing the British Labour Government in the post war era, there is one individual and one theme of paramount significance: Ernest Bevin and his policy of non-intervention".¹²⁸

An understanding of the thought and motivation of the Foreign Secretary, Bevin, proved the key to the problem of Britain and its quest for the answer of Palestine question.¹²⁹ Bevin later referred to British Palestine policy as "his" policy, Bevin as Foreign Secretary was in overall control, and followed developments with a grasp of detail and force and personality unrivalled by his British contemporaries. He has often been denounced as anti semitic. A close scrutiny of Bevin's temperament shows that it was rather the reverse. Bevin's "anti-semitic" reputation developed from his policy not his personal sentiment. He consistently attempted to avert position. He wished to create a binational state in which Arabs and Jews would create a binational state. Thus the Zionists from the

128. Wm. Roger Louis, The British empire in the Middle East 1945-1951, (New York, 1964), p.3.

129. See, Allan Bullock, The Life and Times of Earnest Bevin: Foreign Secretary 1945-51 (London, 1983).

beginning became his adversaries. When he was frustrated, often became angry, and the sometimes rose in wrath against the Americans as well as the Zionists. However, Bevin's outbursts must not be allowed to obscure the creative thrust and coherence of his purpose. Paradoxically, there is truth in the view that his "pro Arab" disposition helped to bring about the creation of the state of Israel. Zionists throughout the world were able to unite in vilifying him.¹³⁰

To Bevin "partition" symbolized a bankruptcy of policy, the end of the road, and an admission of failure, though sometime, unavoidable as in the case of India. In Palestine he pursued the goal of the binational state with such tenacity that one wonders what might have happened if he had become Secretary of State for India in 1945 rather than the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.¹³¹

Bevin believed that the answer to the problem of Jewish refugees and displaced persons should be sought in Europe rather than in Palestine, which he regarded as a predominately Arab country. He found himself caught between

130. W. Roger Louis, "British Imperialism and the End of the Palestine mandate" in The End of the Palestine Mandate, ed. W. Roger Louis and Robert W. Stookey (London, 1986), p.1.

131. Ibid., p.2.

Jewish nationalism supercharged by the emotions of Holocaust, and the anti-Zionism of the Arabs, without whose goodwill the British Empire in the Middle East would be doomed. The British could not support a Jewish state without alienating the Arabs. Nor could the British impose a settlement acceptable to the Arab countries without antagonizing the United States.

He believed, as did many English of his generation, that the British Empire was a beneficent force in world affairs, though the word "Empire" would have to be replaced in the Middle East with something that suggested less exploitation and more equal partnership. The British and the Arabs could work together to develop the region to mutual advantage. Economically the Middle East together with Africa offered just as alluring a prospect as India had in the past. Militarily the countries of the Middle East could be brought into a system of defence that would help to offset the manpower and military potential of the Soviet Union. Such in brief was Bevin's vision. He combined political, economic, and military strands of thought into a coherent general policy that sought to preserve Britain as a great

power. The Middle East was the principal pillar of Britain's position in the world.¹³²

Bevin could not have systematically pursued his Middle Eastern policy without the effective partnership of the Prime Minister, Clement Attlee. Bevin would always take care to square his ideas with Attlee's before cabinet meetings. Together the two of them often made an unbreakable combination though Attlee was skeptical of Britain's capacity to remain a great power in the Middle East.

Apart from these two another figure is of importance. He is Arthur Creech Jones who was parliamentary Under Secretary for the colonies from July, 1940 until October 1946, and then Colonial Secretary until his defeat in the general election of February 1950. Both Attlee and Bevin repeated Creech Jones and listened to his advice. "Creech, as he was known to his friends, was sympathetic to the aims of the moderate Zionists. Nevertheless, he was overshadowed by both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary and his ability to work harmoniously with them explains why the Palestine issue within the Labour Government remained non-controversial."¹³³

132. Ibid.

133. Ibid.

The Colonial Office and the Foreign Office, the two offices of state mainly concerned with Palestine, often clashed over many issues, but when ministerial policy was agreed upon by Creech and Bevin as well as Attlee, then it was virtually invulnerable. The Bevin - Attlee - Creech combination helps to explain why the pro Zionist voices in the cabinet remained ineffective. The policy of the Labour Government in practice appeared to be in variance with the Labour Party's publicly proclaimed sympathy with the Zionist cause.

Bevin confronted Churchill in Parliament, who was not only his most powerful and persistent adversary but also his principal critic on the tactics and timing of withdrawal from Palestine. Churchill was important in the back ground of the Labour Government's policy toward's Palestine because after World War I he himself, as Colonial Secretary had penned the official elaboration of the Balfour Declaration. The Declaration of 1922 established Transjordan as an Arab territory distinct from Palestine. Palestine itself was not to be a Jewish "national home" but there was to be a national home in Palestine. Jewish immigration would be allowed, in Churchill's own phrase, up to the limit of "economic absorptive capacity", which was to be judged by

the mandatory power. The declaration of 1922 served as basis of British policy for nearly two decades. When the White Paper of 1939 attempted to curtail and stabilize the Jewish population of Palestine at one-third of the Arab majority (with further immigration after five years dependent on Arab acquiescence), Churchill denounced it as a breach of faith with the Jews.¹³⁴

In August 1946, he castigated Labour Government's handling of the Palestine problem: "It is our duty... to offer to lay down the Mandate live should... as soon as the war stopped, have made it clear to United that, unless they came in and bore their share, we should lay the whole care and burden at the foot of the United Nations Organisation".¹³⁵

The Anglo American Cooperation and Committee of Inquiry:

Anglo American cooperation over Palestine proved to be perhaps the single most frustrating and elusive goal of the Labour government. A major disagreement developed in August 1945, when President Truman requested the admission of

134. Ibid., p.5.

135. Parliamentary debates, House of Commons, August 1, 1946, Col.1253.

100,000 Jewish refugees into Palestine. Bevin later remarked that "had it not been for a succession of unfortunate actions on the part of United States" following the demand of the 100,000, the question might have been settled. His point was that if the United States and Britain had acted together immediately and decisively at the end of the war, the Palestine drama might have had an entirely different denouement.¹³⁶

When President Truman called for the admission of 100,000 Jewish refugees into Palestine in August, 1945, the population of the country itself, according to British estimates, was 550,000 Jews and 1,200,000 Arabs.¹³⁷ The Foreign Office believed that a sudden influx of Jewish immigrants would destroy any last chance of reconciling the two communities. The Foreign Office stuck to the principle of 1939 White Paper and creation of a binational state. The Consensus in the Colonial Office was to go for partition recommended by Peel commission of 1937. The foreign office predominated because of Bevin.

The report of the Anglo American Committee of Inquiry and Truman's further demand for the 100,000 made things

136. W. Roger Louis, n.131, p.6.

137. Ibid., p.7.

worse. Walter Smart, the Oriental Secretary at the British Embassy in Cairo, reveals the Arab side of the dilemma:

I am struck by the superficiality and intellectual dishonesty of this report... the Committee demands the admission within less than a year of 100,000 immigrants (i.e. a large number than have even been brought in within such a short period at any time in the past) without making any mention of the question of Palestine's economic capacity to absorb them. Of must have been perfectly obvious to the members of the Committee, as it is to all of us, that their proposals must result in acute political must result in acute political and military conflict between the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine and the Arab countries round it.¹³⁸

The policy of the Labour government on the Palestine Question was a painstaking attempt to keep in balance the vital Arab, American parts of the equation. It was the need for American as well as Arab support that explains the British retract to a position of evenhanded withdrawal.

Zionist terrorism offers a basic explanation of why the British were forced to retreat. On July 22, 1940, the Irgun Zvi Leumi blew up the British military headquarters at the

138. W. Roger Louis, n.131, p.8.

King David Hotel in Jerusalem, with heavy loss of British, Arab, and Jewish life. The explosion polarized the Palestine conflict. The explosion at the King David Hotel occurred at the same time that officials in the British and American Governments were attempting to salvage the recommendations of an Anglo American Committee of Inquiry. They wanted to implement a scheme of provincial autonomy. It would have provided an ambergris compromise between the two extreme solution of partition and a binational state. There would have been a large measure of Arab and Jewish autonomy, with certain powers reserved to the central administering authority. This scheme was not acceptable to both Arabs and Zionists.¹³⁹

In this event President Truman became apprehensive about Palestine as a campaign issue in the 1946 congressional elections and feared that he would be accused of "ghettoizing" the Jews in Palestine. President Truman's on the eve of Yam Kippur was a turning point. On October 4, 1946, he expressed the hope for a compromise between the British and Zionist proposals. The Zionists, however, publicized the part of the statement in which the President

 139. Ibid., pp.10-11.

appeared to support "the creation of a viable Jewish state".

Attlee rebuked the President:

I have received with great regret your letter refusing even a few hour's grace to the Prime Minister of a country which has the actual responsibility for the government of Palestine... I am astonished that you did not wait to acquaint yourself with the reasons for the suspension of the conference with the Arabs.¹⁴⁰

The conference mentioned in Attlee's letter to Truman was the London conference on the Middle East. The London conference met sporadically from September, 1946, to February, 1947. The Arabs stood by the letter and spirit of the assurances of 1939 and would yield to nothing less than Palestine as an Arab state. The Jews boycotted the proceedings because of the denial of the opposite promise of Jewish state.

In the last stages of the London Conference, Bevin continued to guide the discussions on the basis of the plan

140. Attlee to Truman, October 4, 1946, Foreign Relations of the United States 1946 (Washington, 1969), VII, pp.704-5.

for provincial autonomy. At the end, the Arabs refused to consider Jewish self - government in any form or further Jewish Immigration. The Jews regarded the boundaries of the "cantons" that the British were prepared to allocate to them as totally unacceptable and would not agree to any scheme not based on the premise of an eventual Jewish state.¹⁴¹

Termination of Mandate: In 1947, at the height of Zionist acts of terrorism the Mandatory Government made one last attempt to settle the Palestine problem by suggesting to both Arabs and Jews that British trusteeship over Palestine should continue for another five years with the declared object of preparing the country as a whole for independence.¹⁴²

The Arabs presented their own proposals for independence with guaranties for Jewish minority rights which were unacceptable to the British Government. The Jewish Agency on the other hand, rejected the Governments' proposals out-right and intensified its terrorist and sabotage activities.

141. W. Roger Louis, n.129, p.461.

142. Cmd. 7088 (Proposals for the future of Palestine).

On Feb., 1947, the British Foreign Secretary announced in the House of Commons that His Majesty's Government had found, "the Mandate has proved to be unworkable in practice, that the obligations undertaken to the two communities had been shown to be irreconcilable",¹⁴³ and therefore announced its intention of giving it up.

Bevin, later on, came close to frankly admitting defeat, at least in the sense of failure to achieve any of the basic British aims. The goal in Palestine, he said, 'was to persuade Jews and Arabs to live together in one State as the Mandate charged us to do. However the facts point opposite to what he said.

143. H.C. Deb, Vol. 433, Cols. 985-944. As quoted in Michael J. Cohen, n.116, p.223.

CHAPTER-IV

THE UNITED STATES, ZIONISM AND THE PALESTINE QUESTION

World War I and American Response to Palestine Question:

World War I was a watershed in modern Middle Eastern history. It set in motion a chain of events that led to the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and released forces of nationalism long brewing in the subject peoples who hoped to achieve independence. Contrary to the hopes of the subject peoples were the ambitions of the European Powers, which had sat at the bedside of the "Sick Man of Europe" waiting for his death that they might satisfy their imperial ambitions. War, nationalism, and imperialism drew the United States away from isolation to assume a role in Middle Eastern affairs. But this departure was only temporary, for the American people and Congress determined that the U.S. would not become enmeshed in the political affairs of the Middle East.

During the early years of World War I the United States adhered to the policy of non-intervention. American diplomatic representatives did not even attempt to dissuade Turkey from entering the war as the ally of Germany and Austria - Hungary. But the War strained American - Turkish relations.¹ Before the U.S. entered the European War,

1. Laurence Evans, United States Policy and the Partition of Turkey (1914-1924) (Baltimore, 1965), p.27.

officials in the State Department began to anticipate the demise of the Ottoman Empire.²

The outbreak of World War I precipitated the fall of the Ottoman Empire. This long expected event caused the United States to assume a larger role in the Middle East. For a time it appeared as though President Woodrow Wilson would have a larger voice in the Middle Eastern settlement, but the U.S. senate thought otherwise and it pressured the United States to return to the policy of non-intervention in Middle Eastern affairs. In the aftermath of the war which depleted American domestic reserves of oil, American petroleum interests, with the support of the U.S. government, engaged in the post war quest for the rich oil resources that lay under the sands of Middle Eastern countries.³

The primary interest that concerned the U.S. in the Middle East during the war was the protection of the missionary institutions. At the beginning of the war, the

2. Ibid., pp.29-31.

3. Thomas A. Bryson, American Diplomatic Relations With the Middle East, 1784-1974: A Survey (New Jersey, 1977), p.57.

missionaries faced a financial crisis. The missionaries not only counted on the services of Ambassador Morgenthau, but they could also rely on President Woodrow Wilson, whose administration restored the open door to pre-eminence in American - Middle Eastern relations and once again gave priority to the interests of the missionary.⁴ The influence of relief officials and missionaries of the policy making level increased during World War I.⁵

Wilson Era:

Wilson and Zionism: The Zionism issues also intruded into American foreign policy considerations. The World Zionist Organisation aspired to the creation of Jewish national home in Palestine. In 1914 there were some 20,000 Jews in the Zionist organisations in the United States, but with a total Jewish population of over 3,000,000, this was a small percentage. Zionism did not expand in the American Jewish community until after the outbreak of war. Notable converts to Zionisms were Louis Brandeis who became in 1916 a Supreme Court Justice, Judge Julian W. Mack, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, and Felix Frankfurter,⁶ also later to become an

4. Ibid., p.59.

5. Ibid., p.61.

6. William Yale, The Near East: A Modern History (Michigan, 1958), p.265.

Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. Brandeis became an ardent Zionist in 1912, and he cultivated Wilson's interest in the aspirations of World Zionism.⁷ Later Frankfurter and Rabbi Wise also exercised considerable influence on the American President. It was behind Wilson's leadership that the American diplomatic machinery responded to the plea of American Zionists for aid to the hard-pressed Jewish community in Palestine. American diplomats were the sole advocates for Jews in Palestine. Ambassador Morgenthau, an assimilationist, not sympathetic with Zionist goals, was their chief hope, and he responded to their call for help.⁸

The initial Jewish problem centered round the fate of some 50,000 Russian Jews in Palestine. With Russia at war in Turkey, the Turks determined to expel these Jews. Morgenthau advised the State Department of their plight on 25 December 1914, and the U.S. Navy made the cruiser Tennessee available to lift some 6000 Jewish refugees to Alexandria. Most of the remaining Russian Jews agreed to accept naturalization as Ottoman subjects to avoid expulsion.⁹ To make matters worse

7. Frank E. Manuel, The Realities of American Palestine Relations (Washington, D.C., 1949), p.116.

8. Ibid., p.120.

9. Ibid., p.123.

for the Jews, the commanding officer of the Tennessee filed a report that Turkish nationalists were determined to destroy the Zionist movement in Palestine. An official proclamation was issued to that effect in January 1915. The influence of Ambassador Morgenthau and the diplomatic agents of the Central Powers were responsible for Djemal Pasha's calling off Turkish persecutions of Jews by March. Further, American Jews proffered the economic aid to Palestinian Jews that made the difference between survival and extinction.¹⁰

The American Joint Distribution Committee, a Jewish philanthropic organisation, took care of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The State Department obtained the necessary permission from the Turks and from the British and the French for the dispatch of relief shipments to Palestine Jew. In 1915 Zionists asked the State Department to use its good offices with the Turks and the Allies to permit shipments of petroleum so necessary for the operation of irrigation pumps in the orange groves. The British and French refused saying the Turks might confiscate the fuel for their war effort.¹¹

10. Ibi.d, pp.127-131.

11. Ibid., pp.142-144.

But U.S. government officials aided the Palestinian Jews in other ways. Ambassador Morgenthau facilitated the transfer of money to them when the war brought a halt to the normal movement of funds. The State and Navy Departments aided the channeling of medical supplies and food.¹²

Thus prior to American entry into World War I, the Protestant missionary lobby and American Zionists had exerted sufficient pressure on official government circles to obtain a more active American role in Middle Eastern affairs. But the high points of Protestant and Zionist utilization of political pressure came after the U.S. declared war on Germany in April 1917. Although in his annual message to Congress in December 1917 Wilson urged a declaration of War on Austria, he elected not to ask for a declaration on Turkey, even though British, French, and Italian officials would have welcomed such a move.¹³

Why did Wilson omit Turkey? It seems that he was primarily motivated by two considerations. First, American military advisers opposed entry into the conflict in the

12. Ibid., pp.144-146.

13. U.S. Congress, Congressional Records, 65 Cong., 2 Sess., pp.18-21.

Middle East because it would drain off forces needed on the Western front.¹⁴ Wilson also considered the arguments of the Protestant lobby, which claimed that war with Turkey would end all relief efforts and cause the closing of missionary institutions.¹⁵ It is safe to assume that consideration of a humanitarian and strategic nature dictated Wilson's decision.

Zionist influence on Wilson was important as demonstrated by the abortive 1917 Morgenthau mission to seek a separate peace treaty with Turkey and by President Wilson's consent to endorse a Jewish national home in Palestine.

The former ambassador to Turkey suggested to Secretary of State lausing in May 1917 that he believed Turkey wanted a separate peace. Such a move would on the surface at least, benefit hard-pressed Palestinian Jews.¹⁶ Morgenthau's idea was broached to Wilson who was interested. The State Department arranged for Morgenthau to travel to Switzerland to contact Turkish diplomats. But American Zionists opposed

14. Evans, n.1., p.42.

15. Bryson, n.3, p.63.

16. Ibid., p.63.

this move. Justice Brandies knew of its purpose, and he advised Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the leading Zionist in Britain, who promptly told British Foreign Secretary Arthur J. Balfour. The two agreed that the Morgenthau mission should be scotched, for an anticipated British offensive against the Turks in Palestine would do far more to assure the future of a Jewish national home.

Brandies arranged for Felix Frankfurter to accompany Morgenthau to ascertain that the latter would not make an agreement compromising the Zionist goal. Acting through Balfour, the Zionists arranged for Morgenthau and Frankfurter to meet Dr. Weizmann at Gibraltar where he deterred Morgenthau from his task.¹⁷

Wilson, Brandies and Balfour Declaration: During the months just before Balfour Declaration was issued (November 2, 1917). President Woodrow Wilson of the United States was under great pressure to join with Britain in enunciating the policy of a Jewish national home in Palestine. The American

17. William Yale, "Ambassador Henry Morgenthau's Special Mission of 1917", Wild Politics, 1 (1944), 30-8-20. As cited in Bryson, n.3, p.63.

government had previously had no political experience and knew next to nothing about the conflict of interests that was building up between Britain and France, the two powers and the Arabs, and the Palestinians and the Zionists the focal point of which became Palestine.¹⁸

The beginning of the United States Government's involvement in Palestinian affairs had come in 1914, when war broke out between the Allies and the Ottoman Empire, and the Palestinian Jewish community applied to American consular agents for protection. President Wilson's interest in Zionism was nurtured by the men who surrounded him, particularly Supreme Court Justice, Louis Brandies.¹⁹

President Wilson was mightily attracted by the idea of becoming the protector of minorities and persecuted peoples abroad including the Jewish community in Palestine. "His advisers interested in the crasser political dividends, publicised the President's interest in the welfare of Jews living in Palestine, counting Jewish votes in the 1916

18. Michael, E. Jansen, The United States And The Palestinian People (Beirut, 1970), p.7.

19. Ibid.

elections and introducing vote-getting in American elections into United States' consideration of Palestine policy."²⁰

However, President Wilson hesitated to commit the United States to the Balfour Declaration as he apprehensive of participating in the predetermination of the future of a country with which the United States was not at war.

In January 8, 1918, President Wilson delivered his famous address in which he set forth his "Fourteen Points" and the terms of the peace settlement with the Ottoman Empire. Point 12 was specifically designed to prevent European Powers from seizing and "exploiting" the former peoples and territories of the Empire. It states:

The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but no other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development.²¹

20. Ibid.

21. Ray A. Billington, Bert J. Loewenberg, Samuel H. Brockunier, (ed.), The Making of American Democracy. Readings and Documents (New York, 1950), p.410.

Finally, on August 31, 1918 the American Zionists increasingly anxious about the President's policies towards the 'other nationalities' in former ottoman domains were able to secure Wilson's guarded approval of the Balfour Declaration to a letter from Rabbi Stephen Wise, the President expressed his "satisfaction" over the growth of the Zionists movement in the United States and over the policy of a Jewish national home in Palestine enunciated by the British government in the Balfour Declaration.²² When Wilson embarked on his efforts to negotiate a just and humane peace after the war, he had certain predispositions towards a Zionist Palestine, but the shape American policy would take as a result of his preference had not yet been determined.

Then on September 21, 1918 the Secretary of State, Robert lauring , in a memorandum prepared for the American delegation to the Peace Conference, suggested that the Arabs should receive full or partial sovereignty over whatever state or states they might establish but that Palestine should be put under a protectorate or a mandate -

22. Jansen, n.18, p.8.

Palestine was obviously not to be included in any independent or partially independent Arab area. The destiny of Palestine was reserved.²³

Louis Brandies: Almost immediately after the outbreak of war, the Federation of American Zionists called an extraordinary conference to consider the prevailing situation. The Conference met in New York on 30 August 1914 and resulted in the setting up of an adhoc body under the name of 'The Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs', with Brandies as Chairman. The Provisional Committee, towards the end of 1914 suggested to the Zionist executive in Berlin that the headquarters of the Organisation should be transferred to the United States.²⁴

The Committee succeeded in kindling the imagination of the Jewish masses, but it also attracted from a very different milieu supporters of the quality and standing of men like Felix Frankfurter who later on became Justice Frankfurter of the U.S. Supreme Court and Julian W. Mack, a judge of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. This hastily improvised body could never have accomplished what it did

23. Ibid.

24. Leonord Stein, The Balfour Declaration (London, 1961), p.190.

without outstanding leadership. It was to its immeasurable advantage that it had for its first chairman so commanding a personality like Brandeis.²⁵

As Chairman of the Provisional Executive Committee Brandies, committed himself for the first time to an active part in Jewish affairs.

He told Balfour at their interview in 1919 that until he became interested in Zionism his whole life 'had been free from Jewish contacts and traditions. In a conversation with Felix Frankfurter, Brandies elaborated that he had first become interested in Zionism when, "as an American, he was confronted with the vast disposition of the vast number of Jews, particularly Russian Jews, that were pouring into the United States".²⁶ A Zionist pamphlet which he came across infused in him the interest for the study of the Jewish problem and to the conviction that Zionism was the answer.

Brandeis told Balfour that he had come to Zionism, 'wholly as an American.'²⁷ This theme he repeated again and

25. Ibid., pp.191-192.

26. A.T. Mason, Brandeis (New York, 1946), p.442.

27. Stein, n.24, p.192.

again in his wartime speeches as Chairman of the Provisional Committee. Some of them are in queer contract to his views that he upheld earlier in his career. He said in an address delivered in 1905:

There is room here for men of any race, of any creed, of any condition in life, not enter for Protestant Americans or Catholic Americans or Jewish Americans nor for German Americans or Russian Americans Habits of living or thought which tend to keep alive difference of origin, or to classify men according to their religious beliefs are inconsistent with American ideals of brotherhood and are disloyal.²⁸

He spoke the opposite ten years later:

Every Irish American who contributed to advancing Home Rule was a better man and a better American for the sacrifice involved. Every American Jew who aids in advancing the Jewish settlement of Palestine will likewise be a better man and a better American for doing so.²⁹

28. Mason, n.26, p.442.

29. Stein, n.24, p.193.

Brandies emphasized on this theme in his many other war time speeches. "My approach to Zionism was through Americanism Gradually it became clear to me that to be good Americans we must be better Jews, and to be better Jews we must become Zionists." Loyalty to America demands that each American Jew become a Zionist. For only through the ennobling effects of its stirrings can we develop the best that is in us and give to this country the full benefit of our great inheritance." The Jewish renaissance in Palestine will help us to make towards the attainment of American ideals of democracy and social justice that large contribution for which religion and life are peculiarly fitted the Jew. Let no one of you if he be a true American, shirk his duty."³⁰

In politics Brandeis had started as a Republican, but he had broken away from his party and, after veering towards Progressive Republicanism, had eventually come down on the Democratic side as a supporter of Woodrow Wilson in the Presidential campaign of 1912.³¹ He was recognized as an important recruit and was considered for office when the tie

30. Brandeis on Zionism, (Washington, Zionist Organisation of America, 1948), pp.29, 49-50, 54, 88.

31. Mason, n.26, p.376.

came for President Wilson to select his first cabinet.³² Faced with strong opposition from various quarters some of it from the moneyed interest and some of it of an anti-semitic hue Wilson decided at the last moment to drop Brandeis, from his list.³³ Brandeis never held political office, but his association with Wilson developed into a relationship, which gave him an influential position as one of the President's most highly esteemed unofficial advisors.³⁴ In 1916, Wilson, having nominated Brandeis to fill a vacancy in the supreme court, encountered some opposition in the Senate.

He wrote in support of the appointment :

I have known him. I have tested him by seeking his advice upon some of the most difficult and perplexing public questions about which it was necessary for me to form a judgement. I have received from his counsel, singularly enlightened, singularly clear sighted and judicial and above all, full of moral stimulation....³⁵

32. Ibid., See also A.S. Link, Wilson. The New Freedom (Princeton, 1956), pp.10 -134.

33. Mason., p.387.

34. A.S. Link, n.32, p.95.

35. Mason, n.24, p.192.

That Brandeis stood high in Wilson's confidence and esteem, was a common knowledge. The prestige of his name, enhanced by his close relations with the President, was an asset of which full use was made by the Zionist leaders, in London, in their dealings with the British government.³⁶ His reputation as one of the Wilson's most trusted advisers materially influenced the course of events in so far as it improved the standing of the Zionists and gave them added claim to attention.³⁷

Strange as it may appear, though it seems clear that when, early in September 1917 Wilson was first sounded by the British War Cabinet as to his views on a pro-Zionist pronouncement, he looked for advice, not to Brandeis, but to his still more intimate confidant, Colonel House. After consultation with Colonel House, he sent a discouraging reply to which Brandeis cannot possibly have been a party. On the other hand, there is reason to believe that Brandeis had something to do with Wilson's second thoughts when a further enquiry on the same subject reached Washington from London a few weeks later. This time Wilson let it be known,

36. Stein, n.24, p.192.

37. Ibid., p.19.

through House that he would favour the proposed British declaration.³⁸

It seems to have been House who finally persuaded him to assent, but in the interval between the two British enquiries Brandeis had intervened to some purpose, though it looks as though his influence had been exerted through House rather than by a personal approach to the President.³⁹

Chaim Weizmann and his London colleagues had hoped that Brandeis would be able to induce Wilson actively to press their case on the British government. This did not happen, but in so far as Brandeis helped to swing Wilson from discouragement to approval of a British assurance to the Zionists, he rendered a signal service to the Zionist cause. Wilson's September message had come near to killing the Balfour Declaration. Had his reply to the second British enquiry been equally chilling, it is quite possible the Declaration would have never seen the light.⁴⁰

38. Ibid., pp.196-97.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., p.197.

On November 2, 1917, came the well known Balfour Declaration, promising the World Zionists a national home land for the Jews in Palestine. This, incidentally, was the first occasion on which the United States - already involved in the war since April 6, 1917 became involved in the political affairs of the Arabs.⁴¹

According to William Yale,⁴² President Wilson's agreement to the Declaration came during Lord Balfour's visit for one month to the United States starting April 22, 1917. Lord Balfour at that time met Justice Louis Brandeis who was then a leading figure in the American Zionist movement, and a trusted advisor to President Wilson. Brandeis had already won the sympathy of President Wilson to the Zionist cause, and assured Lord Balfour that the President was actively sympathetic to a Jewish home in Palestine.

Therefore, when the Balfour Declaration was issued in the form of a note from Lord Balfour to Lord Rothschild a

41. Faiz S. Abu-Jaber, American-Arab Relations From Wilson to Nixon (Washington, 1979), p.3.

42. Captain Yale was a member of the American King Crane Commission sent by President Wilson in 1919 to investigate the wishes of the Syrian people as to the final political settlement in Syria.

leading English Zionist - on November 2, 1917, it had the approval of the British Cabinet as well as the approval of the President of the United States. Yet Wilson insisted upon adding upon adding the modifying clauses to the declaration before he accepted it.⁴³ The President later publicly acknowledged the Balfour Declaration of in a letter addressed to Rabbi Stephen S. Wise.⁴⁴

The carefully prepared text, known as the Balfour Declaration, set the stage for more than thirty years of conflict among Arabs, Jews, and British troops in Palestine. There is no evidence that Wilson saw the final version of the statement before it was communicated to Lord Rothschild. What is clear is that the preoccupied wartime President, did not consider the affair of particular concern to U.S.⁴⁵

Wilson's attitude typified the American approach to Palestine for the next two and half decades. While sympathy for the Zionist movement was occasionally expressed by policy makers, Palestine was seen as a British

43. Sydney N. Fisher, The Middle East (New York, 1960), p.371.

44. George Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs (New York, 1958), p.81.

45. Dan Tschirgi, The Politics of Indecision (Los Angeles, 1983), pp.1-2.

responsibility and care was taken to avoid any official commitment to the creation of a Jewish national home in that county.⁴⁶

Wilson and Paris Peace Conference: In 1918, Wilson showed his interest in the future of the Arabs in the form of the famous 'Fourteen Points'. Point twelve indirectly refers to the Arabs, as well as to other minorities in the Ottoman Empire.

It states:

" The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development".⁴⁷

President Wilson's idealism, as illustrated in this point and his self determination policy expounded in Point Five, seem to be in consistent with his acceptance of the

46. Early sympathetic, but non-committal, pronouncement on Zionism by American foreign policy makers can be found in Reuben Fink, ed., America and Palestine (New York, American Zionist Emergency Council, 1944).

47. R.S. Baker and W.E. Dodd, The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson (New York, 1927), 111, pp.160-61; See also R.S. Baker, Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement (New York, 1922), 111, pp.23-41.

Balfour Declaration as modified. To Arab leaders like Prince Faisal, the son of Sherif Hussain and the Chief spokesman for the Arab cause in the Paris Peace Conference Wilson's twelfth point was interpreted later to foreshadow and nullify the Balfour Declaration and all the Allied secret agreements during the war. For a policy of self determination would of once block the Zionist aims in Palestine, as well as the imperial powers ambitions in the area. The Jews in Palestine then constituted at best not more than 10 per cent of the population and a policy of counting heads would favour Palestines inclusion in an Arab state as pledged to Sherif Hussain of Mecca by the High Commissioner of Egypt, Henry McMahon, in 1916. Therefore, neither the Zionists nor the representative of Great Britain were later happy with the expression's of Wilson's idealism. "Had it been pushed to its logical conclusion, the President's program would have conflicted with practically every one of the secret agreements with the exception perhaps, of the British Arab accord."⁴⁸ Wilson's numerous remarks in which he warned against the disposing off the

48. Lenczowski, n.44, p.88.

Middle East among the great powers did not get a favourable reception among the Allies.⁴⁹

At the Paris Peace Conference, Prince Faisal met with three major forces at work in opposition to Arab aspirations. The British, the French, and the World Zionists. Only in President Wilson he found a sympathetic listener. Wilson opposed annexation saying this would discredit the proposed League of Nations. At length, Prime Minister Jan Smuts of South Africa produced the Mandate concept, a compromise between imperial annexation and Wilsonian self determination. The proposal was accepted.⁵⁰

There were claims and counter claims. The subject peoples of the Ottoman Empire were anxious to have their day, and during the month of February they presented their cases. On 6th February Prince Faisal asked for the creation of Arab confederation. Zionists urged that the Balfour Declaration be carried out, with Britain acting as Mandatory.

49. Foreign Relations of the United States, The Paris Peace Conference, 1919, Vol. III, (Washington, 1943), pp.2113-214. (Hereafter FRUS).

50. Bryson, n.3, p.65.

King Crane Commission: With such a situation the conference reached an impasse. At that point a letter from President Howard Bliss of the American University of Beirut suggested to President Wilson the possibility of sending a commission of inquiry to Syria to determine the wishes of the people.⁵¹ This suggestion was harmonious with Wilson's concept of self determination, and, at the President's insistence, the Supreme Allied Council agreed on 20 March to send such a commission to Syria. In fact Wilson insisted on such a commission, and despite intense Zionist objections voiced by Professor Felix Frankfurter, and British and French refusal to participate in such a commission. Initially known as the Inter - Allied Commission on Mandate in Turkey, the fact finding body ultimately became an American venture because the British and French elected not to participate. The President appointed Dr. Henry C. King, President of Oberlin College, and Charles R. Crane of New York a prominent business man. Other members of the commission were Professor Albert H. Lybyer, Dr. George R. Montgomery, Captain William Yale and Captain Donald M. Broodie.⁵² Between May and July,

51. Harry N. Howard, The King-Crane Commission: An American Inquiry in the Middle East (Beirut, 1963), pp.24-26.

52. Abu Jaber, n.41, p.5.

1919, the King-Crane Commission made a six weeks tour of Syria and Palestine, held hearings and on August 28, 1919, presented their report to the President.⁵³

The King-Crane report testified to the high regard the Arabs of Syria and Palestine had for President Wilson and the United States. According to the report, the Commission found the inhabitants of Syria and Palestine insistent on an independent and united Arab state, and recommended that Prince Faisal be made head of such a united Syrian state. Failing to achieve complete independence, the great majority of the Syrians were found to favour the United States coming in as a mandatory power rather than any other power.⁵⁴

The recommendation of the Commission's report were not followed and in fact were not even discussed by the Paris Peace Conference. " It was simply buried in the archives of the American delegation, and ignored by the conferees. It was not published until 1922, long after the peace settlement."⁵⁵

53. See Henry Harry N. Howard, n.51 for full text of the recommendations of the King-Crane Commission is found in Antonius, Appendix II, pp.443-458.

54. Abu Jaber, n.41, p.6.

55. Lenczowski, n.44, p.92.

This neglect of the Commission's report is attributed to President Wilson's failure to convince the American Senate of the soundness of the Versailles Treaty, as is well known, affected the whole general question of America's involvement in world affairs between the two World War. Wilson never saw the report. In Wilson's absence from Paris, the Commission's report was simply not pressed by the rest of the American delegation and was ignored by the major powers, who proceeded later in the San Remo Conference of April 24, 1920 to divide greater Syria into French and British mandates. As these mandates were allocated, the United States on August 24, 1921, made clear in an "Open Door Policy" statement that she expected her interests and the "fair and equal opportunities which it is believed the United States should enjoy in common with the other powers" to be safe guarded.⁵⁶

The U.S. And Palestine Till 1939:

Following the award of the Palestine mandate to Great Britain in 1920, Congress passed a resolution endorsing the Balfour Declaration. the sponsor of the resolution in the

56. Mandate for Palestine (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1927), pp.49-50.

House of Representation was at point out that passage of the measure would involve no commitment to an "entangling alliance or to any obligation to use military or naval force or the expenditure of any money." The legislation was described as "merely a expression of sympathy and favourable attitude in establishing in Palestine a refuge for the prosecuted Jews of the World".⁵⁷

U.S.A. was not a member of the League of Nations, but it secured "most favoured nation" status in Palestine by concluding a convention with Great Britain in 1924. Under this agreement the United States recognized the legality of the British administration in Palestine and in return was guaranteed equal treatment with members of the League of Nations in matters pertaining to that country.⁵⁸ After being disillusioned with Britain that it would not "secure the establishment of a Jewish national home" the Zionists in American argued that the Anglo-American Convention empowered Washington to veto administrative measures in Palestine that

57. U.S. Congress, Congressional Record, Proceedings and Debates, 67th Cong., IInd Session., June 30, 1922, p.9799.

58. Convention between the U.S. and U.K. reproduced in Reuben Fink, (ed.) America and Palestine (New York, 1944), p.485.

it considered violations of the original League of Nations directive. This point of view was never accepted by the British or American governments.⁵⁹ A public memorandum issued by the Department of State in 1938 sought to clarify Washington's view that it had no right to prevent changes in the terms of the Palestine mandate. Shortly afterward, President Roosevelt made the same point in a letter to the Mayor of Hartford, Connecticut.⁶⁰

American aloofness from Palestine during the interwar period was a product of a generally low level of involvement with the Middle East as a whole. Historically, sustained American contact with the region was imbued with Christian missionary fervour, to convert the Islamic peoples to Christianity. However after World War 1, Washington helped open the way for the development of private American commercial interests in the Middle East. Although economic relations of American with the countries of the region remained minimally important, the policy makers were anxious that Americans not suffer economic discrimination.

59. Dan Tschirgi, The Politics of Indecision. Origins and Implications of American Involvement with the Palestine Problem (U.S. 1983), p.2.

60. Frank E. Manuel, n.7, p.307.

The conventions between the mandatory powers in the Middle East and the United States were designed to ensure this.⁶¹

Noted result of Washington's preoccupation with commercial rights was American participation in the hunt for Middle East oil. Despite the successful introduction of an American presence into the Middle East oil industry, Washington continued to show little desire to enhance its political influence in the area. On account of this the overhall American trade with the region remained modest in the years before world war II.

Not withstanding the government's preference for non involvement in the Middle Eastern affairs, circumstances soon conspired to give the United States an important role in the political life of the region. One such factor was the radical alteration in relations between the Zionist movement and the British government that occurred in the spring of 1939. Feeling themselves forsaken by London, Zionist leaders looked to the large and potentially influential American Jewish community to bring the United States into an active partnership with their cause.

61. Tschirgi, n.59, p.3.

Another set of forces helping to propel the United States into a position of influence in the Middle East was unleashed in September 1939 by the outbreak of World War II. The war years witnessed a revolutionary change in the nature of American interest in the Middle East. In an immediate sense Washington's traditional concern with established philanthropic, cultural, religious, and academic enterprises was quickly superseded by military considerations as vast tracts of the area became potential or actual battlegrounds between Allied and Axis forces. Almost simultaneously, American policy makers began attributing more value to Middle Eastern Oil, in which they recognized an important military asset.⁶²

The end of the war did not reinstate the old cultural interests as the primary focus of American policy in the Middle East. American non-intervention had died at Pearl Harbor. However, in the Middle East it was not immediately replaced by any comprehensive framework for the formulation of foreign policy. Still certain concrete objectives were seen as constituting definite interests in the Arab world. Chief among these were the security of American access to

62. Ibid., p.4.

Middle Eastern oil and the preservation of cordial relations with the Arab Middle East.⁶³

While these regional interests were generally accepted as valid by American policy makers ever before the end of World War II, there was no clear cut policy formulation towards Palestine question. The time was ripe for a long time objective in american foreign policy not mere military expediency.⁶⁴

In brief 1939 stands as a watershed in the American approach to the Palestine problem. On the one hand, the termination of the Anglo-Zionist alliance in Palestine led directly to the creation in the United States of a large, vocal, and influential pressure group. This group was active in roping Washington as champion of the Zionist cause. On the other hand, the accelerated development of American interests in the Middle East needed to satisfy Arabs about U.S. objectives towards Palestine. Both options, Zionists or Arab, helped foreclose non-involvement in the Palestine controversy as a real option for the United States.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

Roosevelt and His Administration:

Roosevelt and 1939 white paper: On the eve of the London conference, Zionists launched a campaign to obtain official American support against any alteration of British policy that might harm their position in Palestine. The Zionist leadership from abroad coordinated its efforts with its movements within America. The objective was to get the support of the American President Franklin D. Roosevelt.⁶⁵

American political system is such that the keyrole in the execution of the foreign policy rests with the President. This reason led Zionists on winning over the White House. "If American intervention was to come in time to prevent a harmful shift in British policy, Zionists' arguments had to be taken straight to the President".⁶⁶ Moreover, Zionists drew encouragement from Roosevelt's reputation as a friend of the Jewish people.⁶⁷

Although Roosevelt's support was the first priority for Zionists they did not ignore efforts to mobilize friendly opinion in other branches of government or among the general public. Both Congress and the State Department were

65. Ibid., p.17.

66. Ibid.

urged to speak out against the impending shift of British policy in Palestine. At the same time, Zionists promoted popular interest in their views through a variety of propaganda projects.

Zionist pressure to intercede at this juncture failed for all practical purposes. The White Paper was issued on May 17, 1939. Roosevelt did not open the issue with Britain. An enquiry into the President's reaction to the White Paper issue is an indicator of subsequent American involvement with Palestine imbroglio. However before we take into account the perspective of the President we have to take care of the conflicting views of the Congress and the Statement, on Palestine tangle.

The U.S. Congress and Palestine: To quote Frank E. Manuel, "the Department of State and Congress, of course, never thought alike on Palestine affairs under any administration because they moved in different orbits."⁶⁸ J.C. Hurewitz. Wrote, "Congress was sensitized to American public opinion."⁶⁹

68. Manuel, n.7., p.276.

69. J.C. Hurewitz, The Struggle for Palestin, (New York, 1950), p.226.

The pro-Zionist public opinion in the United States was visible when the Congress reacted to the British White Paper. Just before the collapse of the London Conference, the Palestine issue was brought the Senate by Arizona's Henry Ashurst. He is a telegram, sent earlier to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, had urged the President and the State Department to impress upon Great Britain that "Catastrophe" would result were the Balfour Declaration violated.⁷⁰

Again a pro-Zionist joint statement was given by 28 Senators. This was a considered opinion of 1/3rd of the senate and merited some attention. The joint statement called upon the British government to abandon any attempt of liquidating the Mandate in Palestine "based upon the Balfour Declaration". It further stated that a change in British policy might result in "a new state dominated by a narrow [non-Jewish] majority."⁷¹ It ignored the fact that the then Jewish community in Palestine constituted only 1\3rd of the whole population.

70. U.S. Congress, Congressional Record, Proceedings and Debates of the 76th Congress, First Session, Vol.84, Part 3, Senate (Washington, D.C. U.S. Government printing office, 1939), March 16, 1939, p.2799.

71. Ibid., March 17, 1939, p.2915.

The statement emphasised on both the Balfour Declaration and the 1924 Anglo American Convention on Palestine as binding commitments for Britain and U.S. to allow the Zionists, when they colonized Palestine. The 28 senators failed to perceive any ambiguity in the Balfour Declaration or they were ignorant of the fact that the Anglo-American convention did not empower the United States to prevent alterations in the Palestine mandate.

Publication of the White Paper on May 17, brought forth dogmatic statements, all of which were pro Zionist, in both the House and the Senate.

In the House, Representatives Everett Dirksen and Ralph Church voiced indignation over the White Paper.⁷² Representative Bender drew applause when he labeled the White Paper " a surrender to [Arab] force and violence", and called upon the U.S. "to demand" that London rescind its new policy.⁷³

This is significant to note that observations made by Senators and Representatives against the White Paper in the first half of 1939 did not include any reference to

72. Ibid., House, May 22, 1939, p.5901; May 23, 1939, p.5997.

73. Ibid., May 22, 1939, pp.5930-31.

possible American participation in the administration of Palestine ensuring the success of Zionism. "Congressional sympathy for Zionism stopped short of a willingness to assume active responsibility in Palestine; Congressional humanitarianism did not include a willingness to open American borders to the persecuted."⁷⁴

An important feature of the approach of the Congress towards Palestine problem was that it was not based upon consideration of the issues at stake within Palestine itself. It was also not based to any great extent upon consideration of international repercussions occasioned by the Arab-Zionist quagmire. Instead the action of the Congress was influenced to a great extent by an orchestrated public opinion. As the Zionist movement in America developed into a well organized and efficient pressure group after 1939, Congress became apparently more vulnerable to the sophistry of Zionists.

Department of State and Palestine: Manuel's earlier metaphorical distinction between the Congress and the State Department seems to be correct: the two did more in

74. Don Tschirgi, n.59, p.27.

different "orbits". Whereas the Congress viewed the Palestine problem in terms of its domestic importance the State Department looked into the issue of its international implications.

The prevailing State Department outlook on Palestine can be gauged by a memorandum sent by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, Wallace Murray to Secretary Hull and Undersecretary Sumner Welles:

It is altogether desirable that the United State Government refrain from injecting itself in any way into the London discussions and wait until a solution has been reached or, failing such a solution, until the British Government announces its own plan of procedure.⁷⁵

Zionist attempts to obtain Roosevelt's help were opposed by Undersecretary of State Welles on grounds that in the deteriorating political situation in Europe it was not advisable for the United States to challenge the British government. Although Welles was sympathetic towards Zionist aspirations, he arrived at this conclusion reluctantly.⁷⁶

75. Murray to Hull and Welles, February 9, 1939. As quoted in Dan Tschirgi, n.59, p.29.

76. Welles to Murray, May 5, 1939. As cited in Dan Tschirgi, n.59, p.30.

The turn of international scenario in the spring of 1939 led Secretary of State Hull to brush off Zionist requests for support. Hull resigned in the fall of 1944. Till then Hull maintained a rigid and restricted outlook on the legitimate scope of U.S. interest in Palestine:

"Our relations to Palestine rested on December British mandate Treaty of December, 3, 1924, whereby the United States had recognised Britain's Mandate...".⁷⁷

However, the advice given to the President by the State Department after 1939 pertaining to Palestine was based on international political considerations, rather than on restrictive narrow interpretation of 1924 agreement with Britain. Moreover, long before Hull left office events pointed to the fact that neither State Department nor the White House could avoid the Palestine issue by citing the Anglo-American Convention. It became progressively difficult for Washington to avoid the Palestine question by parroting the conception of American interests that had been formulated 20 years earlier.⁷⁸

77. Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York, 1948), Vol. II, p.1528.

78. Dan Tschirgi, n.59, p.31..

The President: As the chief executive authority of foreign policy of America, President Franklin Roosevelt became the focal point for the conflicting views, advice and pressures from which the American government's reaction to the White Paper was distilled. "In many ways the President's approach to the limited question of the White Paper presaged that which the White House, would follow during the next decade."⁷⁹

The White Paper controversy had put the President in an uncomfortable position. On the one hand, Roosevelt was aware of the British desire to revise its Palestine policy on account of strategic considerations, the President was also receptive to arguments advanced by his pro-Zionist intimates. Yet he did not agree with Congressional calls for strenuous pressure upon the British. Nor did he accept the State Department's advice that strict detachment should be followed.⁸⁰

As regards the White Paper Roosevelt did not act according to the advices he received. The tentative overtures he made to the British government through

79. Ibid., p.35.

80. Ibid.

Ambassador Kennedy were against the advises of the State Department. Roosevelt gave Zionists an exaggerated picture of his efforts on their behalf. This was also alone to an extent to appear in tune with a well-publicized and popular cause. "Yet the President does not appear to have been engaging in a completely cynical display of dissimulation in his relations with American Zionists. The truth of the matter seems to be that in the spring of 1939 he had not decided how to react to the White Paper."⁸¹

After the release of the white paper on May 17, 1939, Roosevelt continued to recognise that Palestine was a British matter. Nevertheless, he privately expressed the belief that "the British are not wholly correct in saying that the framers of the Palestine Mandate could not have intended that Palestine should be converted into a Jewish state against the will of the Arab population of the country."⁸² Only four months earlier Roosevelt had assured Ibn-Saud "that the Government has never taken any position different from that which it has maintained from the

81. Ibid.

82. Hull, n.77, 1530.

beginning toward this question."⁸³ Now Ibn Saud has left to himself to interpret what American policy had been. Roosevelt recognized:

While the Palestine Mandate undoubtedly did not intend to take away the right of citizenship and of taking part in the Government on the part of the Arab population, it ... did intend to convert Palestine into a Jewish Home which might very possible become preponderantly Jewish within a comparatively short time".⁸⁴

For these reasons the President felt that "it is something that we cannot give approval to by the United States", even though "there are some good ideas in regard to actual administration of government".⁸⁵

Roosevelt in described his own reaction:

My snap judgement is that the British plan for administration [as embodied in the White Paper] can well be the basis of an administration to be set up and to carry on

83. Roosevelt Papers, Personal Paper File 3500, (FRDL, New York).

84. Hull, n.77, p.65.

85. Ibid.

during the next five year; that during the next five years the 75,000 additional Jews should be allowed to go to Palestine to settle; and at the end of five years the whole problem could be resurveyed and at that time either continued on a temporary basis for another five years or permanently settled if that is then possible I believe that the Arabs could be brought to accept this because it seems clear that 75,000 additional immigrants can be successfully settled on the land and because also Arab immigration into Palestine since 1920 has vastly exceeded the total Jewish immigration during this period.⁸⁶

The President's comment on Arab immigration into Palestine was of course, erroneous. Actually between 1920 and 1939, 306, 049 Jews immigrated into Palestine, while during the same period the figure for Arab immigration was 18,630.⁸⁷ This also shows that Roosevelt had a deficient factual grasp of the Palestine question. The memorandum also revealed his ambivalence toward the White Paper. In 1939 the President was of the belief that the right administration of the Palestine Mandate would ultimately result in the formation of a Jewish State. However, the contradiction between this belief and his sudden realization gave rise to uncomfortable dilemma that he exhibited toward.

86. United States, Department of State, FRUS, Vol. IV, p.757.

87. See foot note, n.73, in Dan Tschirgi, n.59, p.277.

the White Paper. He took refuge in favour of immediate necessity.

Roosevelt's response to the White Paper showed his understanding that any policy purposefully directed toward Palestine problem should take into consideration the political future of Palestine. White responding to the White Paper he consciously opted for a policy of expediency, but he did so in the belief that it was adequate only as a temporary measure.⁸⁸

Roosevelt and the Palestine Resolution: On January 27, 1944, two identically worded resolutions were introduced in the House of Representatives. The proposal measures called for the United States to use its good offices and take appropriate measures, to the end that the doors of Palestine shall be opened country, and that there shall be full opportunity for colonization, so that the Jewish people may ultimately reconstitute Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth.⁸⁹ A similar measure was introduced in

88. Dan Tschirgi, n.59, p.37.

89. U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs Hearings on H.R. 418 and H.R. 419, p.1. As cited in Dan Schirgi, n.59, p.98.

the Senate four days later, jointly sponsored by Robert Wagner and Republican leader Robert Taft.⁹⁰

The resolution as presented was almost identical with the Baltimore Programme⁹¹ which had called for the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth. An interesting aspect in the Congressional resolution was the substitution of the word "reconstitute" in place of "be established" the obvious intention was to create the impression that a Jewish commonwealth had once existed and that its resolution was only proper. This phraseology enabled those so disposed to view a modern Jewish state as a fulfilment of Biblical prophecy.⁹²

The resolutions placed the Roosevelt administration in a quandary. Still determined to avoid any commitment on Palestine, the White House could not ignore the adverse effect that its out-right opposition might have on the Democratic Party in the November elections. The problem was aggravated by the impending Allied invasion of Europe and

90. Ibid., p.99.

91. Biltmore Programme discussed in Chapter II.

92. Richard P. Stereno, American Zionism and U.S. Foreign Policy 1942-1947 (New York, 1962), pp.38-39.

the need to avoid any out-break in the Middle East that would complicate the military situation. On account of these factors, the administration, started a secret, well coordinated campaign to prevent Congressional approval of the Palestine resolutions. Slightly over six weeks after the measures were first introduced, these obstructive tactics were successful. However, the actions of the White House raised serious questions in the minds of leading Zionists about Roosevelt's attitude toward their cause.⁹³

In order to offset Zionist anger over the scuttling of the resolutions Roosevelt received the Co-chairman of the American Zionist Emergency Council, Rabbis Stephen Wise and Abba Hilled Silver, on March 9, 1944.⁹⁴ This was some consolation to them. Roosevelt met with wise and Silver. The President apparently promised that he would speak out clearly in support of Zionism at a later date. In the mean time, he authorized them to make the following statement:

The President authorized us to say that the American Government has never given its approval to the White Paper of 1939.

93. Dan Tschirgi, n.59, p.98.

94. Stevens, n.92, p.80.

The President is happy the doors of Palestine are today open to Jewish refugees, and that when future decision are reached, full justice will be done to those who seek a Jewish National Home, for which our Government and the American people have always had the deepest sympathy and today more than ever, in view of the tragic plight of hundreds of thousands of homeless Jewish refugees.⁹⁵

It is interesting to note that on the very day when he received the Rabbis Roosevelt wrote concerning the 'volume of protests' from the Arab world stirred by the impending resolution. he elaborated, "what happens if delicate international situations get into party politics." He was also happy that the resolutions were under control in the House.⁹⁶

It is quite obvious that party politics had influenced the President's announcement to the Rabbis. For not only, was the Democratic Party concerned, with the coming

95. Zionist Organisation of America, 47th Annual Report (Washington, D.C., 1944), p.62.

96. Roosevelt Papers, Official File 700, (FDRL, New York).

elections, but the President and Rabbi Wise were friends of long standing.⁹⁷ Wise had supported the President in all of his campaigns and had even made numerous addresses throughout the country on Roosevelt's behalf, Wise had acted as a consultant on problems affecting Jews⁹⁸ and it was expected that Roosevelt would give him sympathetic hearing. However, Roosevelt was not going to be cornered.

Encouraged by their favourable reception at White House Wise and Silver drafted another statement on March 13, 1944, for issuance by the President. The suggested declaration supported free and unrestricted entry of Jews into Palestine with full opportunity for colonization", and also stated that the purpose and intent of American policy towards Palestine was to see a Jewish commonwealth constituted in that country.⁹⁹ No reply was sent to this communication, and on Hull's advice, the President merely made a general declaration on March 24 dealing with European refugees.¹⁰⁰

97. Stevens, n.92, p.8.

98. Roosevelt Papers, Personal Paper File 3992, (FDRL, New York).

99. Stevens, n.92, p.105.

100. Roosevelt Papers, Official File 700, (FDRL, New York).

Arab reaction to the Statement of the President of March 9 was prompt. Roosevelt's reply attempted to straddle the issue. He admitted that he was correctly quoted. The President also pointed out that his statement had mentioned a Jewish national home rather than a Jewish Commonwealth. Furthermore, although the United State had never expressed approval of the White Paper, it had never, on the other hand, "taken a position relative to it."¹⁰¹ Hull remarked:

In General the President at times talked both ways to Zionists and Arabs, besieged as he was by each camp. Rabbis Wise and Silver believed that the President had made pledges to them. The State Department made no pledges.¹⁰²

Election of 1944: Hull's suggestion to the President on July 26, 1944, advising that the leaders of both parties refrain from making statements during the election campaign which might "tend to arouse the Arabs or upset the precarious balance of forces in Palestine".¹⁰³ This was not paid attention to, by either parties.

¹⁰¹. Hull, n.77, p.1936.

¹⁰². Ibid.

¹⁰³. Ibid., p.3500.

In June the Republican National Convention approved a resolution that declared:

In order to give refuge to millions of distressed Jewish men, women and children driven from their homes by tyranny, we call for the opening of Palestine to their unrestricted immigration and land ownership, so that in accordance with the full intent and purpose of the Balfour Declaration of 1917, Palestine may be constituted as free and democratic commonwealth. We condemn the failure of the President to insist that the mandatory of Palestine carry out the provision of the Balfour Declaration and the mandate, while he pretends to support them.¹⁰⁴

The Democrats became increasingly anxious. They also bid for Jewish votes and were at pains to counter the Republicans Apprehensions increased that failure to have a competitive Palestine plank in the Democratic platform would seriously hurt the President's prospects in the New York Jewish community. Judge Bernard A. Rosenblatt underlined the importance of the Jewish vote in the crucial areas:

104. New York Times, June 28, 1944. As quoted in Dan Tschirgi, n.59, p.107.

New York is entitled to 47 electoral votes, while only 266 electoral votes are necessary to elect a President. Whether the vote of the State of New York goes to one party or another (and that may be by relatively few votes in a population of over 13 million) will make a difference of 14 votes in the electoral college, so that it may be readily understood why a presidential contest may hinge on the political struggle in the State of New York, and to a lesser extent in the large states of Pennsylvania (36) Illinois (27), or Ohio (23).¹⁰⁵

The Democratic platform also adopted the Palestine plank that outdid the Republican one. Although shorter, the Democrat's pronouncement called for a "Jewish Commonwealth" and was, therefore, more pleasing to the Zionists:

We favour the opening of Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonization, and such a policy as to result in the establishment of a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth.¹⁰⁶

105. Bernard A. Rosenblatt in *Zionist Review*, November 29, 1946, p.3. As cited in Stevens n.92, pp.82-83.

106. *New York Times*, July 21, 1944, As cited in Dan Tschirgi, n.59, p.109.

Competition for Jewish vote did not abate. In early October the Republican Presidential candidate, Thomas Dewey, promised that as president he would work toward opening Palestine to unlimited Jewish immigration and land ownership and for the country's "reconstitution" ... as a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth".¹⁰⁷

On October 15 Roosevelt through a message reinforced the position taken by the Democratic Convention in July. The President repeated the text of the Democrat's plank and added:

Efforts will be made to find appropriate ways and means of effectuating this policy as soon as practicable. I know how long and ardently the Jewish people have worked and prayed for the establishment of Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth. I am convinced that the American people give their support to this aim and if re-elected, shall help to bring about its realization.¹⁰⁸

Indeed it has a tribute to the effectiveness of the techniques set in motion by Dr. Silver that the Biltmore

107. Dan Tschirgi, n.59, p.109.

108. FDR to Wagner, October 15, 1944, Wagner Papers. As cited in Stevens, 92, pp.60-61.

Program had at last found an echo in a presidential statement".¹⁰⁹ Roosevelt who upto now had vigorously tried to avoid any uncompromising support to the Zionists fell to the Democratic election fears in 1944.

Post election policy: Roosevelt won the elections. Zionists once again pressed for government action for pro-Zionist Congressional resolutions. In the mean while Edward Stettinius had replaced Cordell Hull as secretary of state. Stettinius wished to discuss the issue with the President.¹¹⁰ When the Secretary of State brought up the question with Roosevelt a few days later, it was decided to inform Wise that the administration felt that it was not wise to consider the resolutions this time. Stettinius therefore also informed the Zionists of the administrations position.¹¹¹ Zionists leaders were deeply divided over how to react to these signs of official recalcitance.

The President was also well informed of the Arab unrest produced by pro-Zionist declarations of Republican and

109. Stevens, n.92, p.84.

110. Dan Tschirgi, n.59, p.109.

111. Ibid.

Democratic candidates. There entered an additional factor. This was the growing Soviet interest in the Middle East. However the President still had an open mind on the Palestine issue:

Give me an opportunity to talk with Stalin and Churchill. There are all kinds of scheme - crack pot and otherwise being advanced. Perhaps some solution will come out of this whole matter. Naturally I do not want to see a war between a million or two, people in palestine against the whole Muslim world in that area-seventy million strong.¹¹²

The President's mention of Stalin and Churchill referred to his impending journey to Yalta. The tripartite summit meeting, held between February 4, and 11, brought forth Zionist demand for a definite action by the administration. Senator Wagner reminded the President that the discussions abroad might be "of fateful significance for the Palestine issue and the future of Jews as a people". The Senator argued that "if Arab consent is to be a prerequisite of any political settlement [in Palestine]

112. Ibid., p.114.

there can be no hope of justice to the Jewish people." He said what had to be done was to establish a Jewish state with "determination and speed," for the Arabs would accept an "accomplished fact".¹¹³

Nonetheless, the President had already come to conclusion that prevented him from falling into line with the strategy advocated by Wagner. Retaining a firm faith in his own diplomatic abilities, the President had decided to meet with Ibn Saud in order to explore possibilities for some agreed solution to the Palestine problem.

Ibn Saud: At the end of the Yalta Conference, during which the topic of Palestine did not arise, the President went to Suez Canal, where without prior announcement he met Ibn Saud aboard the American warship Quinsy on February 14, 1945.¹¹⁴

Ibn Saud was straight forward in his opinion towards Zionism to which he was opposed. To Roosevelt's enquiry about immigration of Jews to Palestine Saud said they return to lands from which they had been driven. in his opinion, those who for various reasons could not do so should be

113. Ibid.

114. Ibid., p.115.

given "living space in the Axis countries which oppressed them."¹¹⁵ According to the official American memorandum of Roosevelt's conversation with Ibn Saud, the King then elaborated on the Palestine issue:

His Majesty --- expounded the case of the Arabs and their legitimate rights in their lands and stated that the Arabs and the Jews could never cooperate, neither in Palestine, nor in any other country. His Majesty called attention to the increasing threat to the existence of the Arabs and the crisis which has resulted from continued Jewish immigration and the purchase of land by the Jews. His Majesty further stated that the Arabs would rather die than yield their lands to the Jews.¹¹⁶

When Ibn Saud ended these remarks with an appeal for American support, Roosevelt replied:

He wished to assure His Majesty that he would do nothing to assist the Jews against the Arabs and would make no move hostile to the Arab people. He reminded His Majesty

115. Ibid.

116. Ibid. See also Francis Perkins, The Roosevelt. I knew (New York, 1946), pp.87-89. And Grace Tully, FDR My Boss (New York, 1949), pp.352, 53.

that it was impossible to prevent speeches and resolutions in congress or in the press which may be made on any subject. His reassurance concerned his own future policy as Chief Executive of the United State.¹¹⁷

Roosevelt seemed deeply impressed by the firmness of Ibn Sauds' views. The President later remarked that of "all the men he had talked to in his life, he had least satisfaction from this iron willed monarch".¹¹⁸ While returning to Washington Roosevelt told Secretary of State Stettinius that he looked forward to a conference with Congressional leaders to "re-examine our entire policy in Palestine."¹¹⁹

Zionists were caught unawares over the surprise meeting with Ibn Saud. Zionist's apprehensions and anxieties increased on March 1, when the President addressed the Congressional audience:

Of the problems of Arabia I learned more about the whole problem, the Muslim problem, the Jewish problem by

117. Ibid. pp.115-116.

118. Elliot Roosevelt, As he saw it (New York, 1946), p.245.

119. Edward Stettinius, Roosevelt and the Russians, (New York, 1949), p.289.

talking with Ibn Saud for five minute than I could have learned in an exchange of two or three dozen letters.¹²⁰

The President's comments after coming from Yalta raised another controversy. Democratic Senator from Colorado, Edwin Johnson used scathing language:

With all due respect to the President and King Ibn Saud, I must say that the choice of the desert king as expert on the Jewish question is nothing short of amazing --- I imagine that even Fala [Roosevelt's pet dog] would be more of an expert¹²¹

This statement of the Senator is an indicator fo pro Zionist thinking in U.S. Johnson finds Ibn Saud irrelevant to Palestine problem while he himself sitting in America feels appropriate to pass judgements on the fate of Palestinians who constituted on over whelming majority. The very existence of Palestinians and that too in overwhelming majority , was jarring in the Zionist scheme of things.

120. New York Times, March 2, 1945. As cited in Stevens, n.92, p.90.

121. Joseph B. Schechtman, The United States and the Jewish State Movement (New York, 1966), p.110.

The Zionist reaction led to the return of Dr. Silver and his more militant policies.¹²² The anger abated by mid-March, when Rabi Wise was received at the White House and authorized to issue the following statement in the President's name:

"I made my position on Zionism clear in October. That position I have not changed and shall continue to seek to bring about its earliest realization."¹²³

This statement led to strong reaction from Arab world in the form of numerous protest to among which one was from Ibn Saud. In response to a letter from Ibn Saud, the State Department reassured the king that no decision would be reached without consulting Arabs and Jews and assured the King the Roosevelt would take no action "which might prove hostile to the Arab people."¹²⁴ Similar replies were forwarded to Syrian and Iraqi leaders.

On April 12, 1945, Roosevelt died. His association with the palestine question may aptly be described as 'self contradictory involvement.

122. Stevens, n.92, p.90.

123. New York Times, March 17, 1945. As cited in Dan Tschirgi, n.59, p.115.

124. Stettinius, n.119, p.290.

Roosevelt and Zionism: David Niles, a White House functionary once confessed to "serious doubts in my mind that Israel would have come into being if Roosevelt had lived".¹²⁵

Roosevelt was in a habit of turning loose his political imagination. Roosevelt had a vision for Palestine, more ambitious than his British allies or even contemporary Zionism dared to advocate. "As a factor in policy determination Roosevelt's extravagant notions evaporated with his death But they are highly revealing of premises that American idealists brought to consideration of Palestine for the coming postwar era..."¹²⁶

The President, as early as 1938, had complained to Cordell Hull that, in the Balfour Declaration, "The British made no secret of the fact they promised Palestine to the Jews. Why are they now reneging on their promise?"¹²⁷ The statement is an indicator of Roosevelt's vision and thinking on Palestine: Britain and the World at large had promised Palestine to the Jews.

125. Peter Grose, "The President versus the Diplomats", in W. Roger Louis and Robert W. Stookey, The End of the Palestine Mandate (ed.), (London, 1986), p.35.

126. Ibid.

127. FRUS, 1939, IV, pp.748-58.

A plan started taking form in his mind. He visualized the transfer of entire Arab population to a nearby land. Two hundred thousand to three hundred thousand Arabs should be resettled, at a cost of some \$ 300 million. Britain and France should together put up one-third of that, the United States another third and wealthy Jews of the Western democracies the rest. Twice he raised this notion with British representatives, only to be firmly told that no amount of financial inducement would move the Palestinian Arabs.¹²⁸

The President was unconvinced and told Zionist friends early in 1939, as they reported, that "as soon as he was somewhat relieved from the pressure of other affairs, he might try to tackle the job."¹²⁹ Thus emerged a second theme in Roosevelt's Palestine vision: once the pressure of war were lifted, he would himself move in to resolve the dilemma that had resisted the efforts of statesmanship before.

Roosevelt first met Chaim Weizmann, he pressed his Zionist visitor on the economic absorptive capacity of

128. Grose, n.125, p.35.

129. Ibid.

Palestine. Roosevelt asked breezily, "What about the Arabs? Can't that be settled with a little baksheesh?" Weizmann explained to the President that uprooting the entire Arab population would not be quite as simple as that".¹³⁰

During 1942, Roosevelt, during Christmas season expressed his thoughts on Palestine to his neighbour and Treasury Secretary Henry J. Morgenthau, Jr., who remembered Roosevelt's ramblings vividly:

What I think I will do is this. I would call Palestine a religious country. Then I would leave Jerusalem the way it is and have it run by the Orthodox Greek Catholic Church, the Protestants and the Jews - have a joint committee run it....I actually would put a barbed wire around Palestine, and I would begin to move the Arabs out.... I would provide land for the Arabs in some other part of the Middle East....Each time we move out an Arab we would bring in another Jewish family.... But I don't want to bring in more than they can economically support.... It would be an independent nation just like any other nation.. Naturally, if there are 90% Jews, the Jews would dominate the government...

130. Ibid., p.36.

There are lots of places to which you could move the Arabs. All you have to do is drill a well, because there is this large underground water supply, and we can move the Arabs, to places where they can really live....¹³¹

The most revealing portrayal of the Roosevelt vision, however, came after-not before - the election. It was reported by an associate totally aloof from any possible ethnic aspiration, Edward R. Stettinius the man who had replaced Secretary Hull. Roosevelt spoke of his thinking in no uncertain terms. Stettinius noticed in his diary of November 10, 1944, "Palestine should be for the Jews and no Arabs should be in it". "He has definite ideas on the subject... It should be exclusive Jewish territory".¹³²

In a confidential talk, after an election there was no need for the President to disguise his true sentiments. These sentiments, as talked to Stettinius, envisaged a Jewish Palestine in the original meaning of the Balfour Declaration as he understood it. Roosevelt envisioned that the Arabs must be moved out of Palestine, whether they liked it or not, whether with "baksheesh" or resettlement funds,

131. John Morton Blum, From the Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. III, Years of War, 1941-4, ed., (Boston, 1967), p.208.

132. The Diaries of Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., 1943-1946 (New Yor, 1975), p.170. As cited in Grose, n.125, p.36.

Palestine should be made exclusive Jewish territory. He intended "to point out to Ibn Saud what an infinitesimal part of the whole area was occupied by Palestine and that he could not see why a portion of Palestine could not be given to the Jews without harming in any way the interests of the Arabs".¹³³

Nowhere in Roosevelt's record is there an indication that, the President envisaged the unilateral proclamation of a sovereign Jewish state such as occurred in May, 1948.¹³⁴ Roosevelt's Middle Eastern policy implied coexistence between Jews and Arabs. This sounds like the binationalism that became the banner of the State Department and of all who opposed the notion of a Jewish state. But Roosevelt did not think of Palestine alone when he thought of Arab-Jewish cooperation. Like the most extreme Zionists, he determined that Palestine itself would be secure and exclusive for Jewish nationalism. Arab nationalism would find its full expression in the newly independent Arab states of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq. Together these new nations on the

133. Schechtman, n.121, p.110.

134. Grose, n.125, p.38.

Middle East, the Jewish state and the Arab states - would form a wide binational federation to promote their mutual development.¹³⁵

Given the restive nature of the West Asian society, expecting a harmonious cooperation, was a far cry. Roosevelt was bugged with a big question mark how to promote cooperation between the two communities. What could Arab nationalists and Jewish nationalists do to strive towards their own aspirations without crushing the aspirations of others? There were the questions Roosevelt was pondering when his days came to an end and the problem became the responsibility of another.

From Truman to the U.N.O.

The biographers of Harry S. Truman have produced contrasting biographical portraits of him. Reading through in biographies a picture emerges that he was a man of great contradictions. He was not nearly so ignorant as some contemporary observers thought of him, but neither does his record quite fit in with the legend some latter day historians have constructed.¹³⁶

135. Ibid.

136. For contradictory portrayal of Harry S. Truman, see A. Steinberg, The Man from Missouri (New York, 1962), R. Donovan, Conflict and Crisis (New York, 1979).

Truman had little preparation for the position into which President Roosevelt's death catapulted him. It took time to grow into the job. Though no scandal tarnished Truman's image he had retained certain characteristics which were the hallmark of a 'machine bred politician'. Robert Denovan has defined these as "intense partisanship, stubborn loyalty, a certain insensitivity about transgressions of political associates and a disinclination for the companionship for intellectuals and artists".¹³⁷ Most of his friends were allegedly "plain, obscure, even mediocre men who shared his love of politics and poker". There were of course exceptions to this generalization, Dean Acheson being the most obvious.¹³⁸

Truman may have been unsophisticated in international affairs, but he quickly adopted an approach to the Palestine question. This enabled him ultimately to steer clear though tempestuous course between the whirlpools of Zionism and British imperialism.¹³⁹

137. As quoted in Michael J. Cohen, Palestine and the great powers 1945-1948 (New Jersey, 1992), p.44.

138. Ibid.

139. William, Roger Louis, The British Empire in the Middle East 1945-1951 (New York, 1984), p.420.

To his domestic Jewish constituency he persistently expressed compassion for the refugees. At the same time he resisted commitments that might alienate the Arabs and jeopardize the supply of Middle Eastern oil. To the British he revealed a characteristic American suspicion of imperialism and the usual British 'stunt' of deviousness and delay. If any one thing was clear in his mind it was the necessity to avoid being sucked into Middle Eastern troubles that would involve American troops. To Zionists he made public pronouncements to resolve simultaneously the problems of the displaced persons and the Jewish national home, but in fact he offered tangible American assistance only in the form of transport for the 100,000 Jews to Palestine. He resented Zionist pressure, but he never forgot that the three million Jews of New York constituted the largest metropolitan Jewish population in the entire world and that their vote might be decisive in a national election. Like Bevin, Truman had a remarkable capacity for occasional indiscreet and honest comment. When asked for an explanation of his pro-Jewish policy he once replied: "I have to answer to hundreds of thousands who are anxious for

the success of Zionism. I do not have hundreds of thousands of Arabs in my constituent's."140

This statement of Truman shows his intense pragmatism towards a political imbroglio. It aims at his pro-Zionist stance though not on account of human considerations, which he was not devoid of but down to earth practical compulsions.

Nevertheless one comes across quite frequently, a wide discrepancy between Truman's private opinions and his public utterances. He came to the Presidency a moderate conservative, but had inherited a liberal mandate and a liberal set of advisors. The gap between compulsive public profession and genuine emotional commitment was responsible for much of his erratic performance. His impulsive spontaneity, followed frequently by embarrassing retraction, gave rise in Washington to popular quip: "To err is Truman".141

Truman wanted to be the master of his own Palestine policy. Nonetheless, these were conflicting demands within

140. Ibid.

141. Cohen, n.137, p.41.

his administration and contradictory pledges given by his inimitable predecessor. Roosevelt's right hand, had promised sympathy for the Jewish national home while his left hand conveyed assurances that he would take no action which might prove hostile, to the Arab people".

During Truman's presidency the theme of continuity may be found in his concern for the Jewish vote and his reluctance to commit American troops. To Truman's critics he appeared to lunge from crisis to crisis, and in the spring of 1948 he did in effect lose control of American policy towards Palestine, but when he regained it he acted decisively in favour of partition with results comparable to F.D.R.'s great triumphs in world politics.¹⁴²

Truman succeeded as a President in the last weeks of the war in Europe, when the Western world was in Europe, when the Western world was discovering Nazi death camps. There is no reason to doubt that Truman too was genuinely moved by the plight of those who had survived Nazi - occupied Europe. However, Truman had other mundane reasons for airing his sympathies for the Jewish victims.

142. Louis, n.139, p.421.

As a nonelected president eager to succeed in his own right, and indeed, as a highly unpopular President during his first term, Truman could hardly have failed to be less than hypersensitive to the anticipated effect on the many Jewish voters of his policy regarding the Jewish refugee's or the displaced person (DP) problem.¹⁴³

White House aides: At the White House, the two most influential aids regarding Palestine were Clark Clifford and David Niles. Clifford has been credited with reorganizing the shambles in the administration. Niles has been referred to as the administration's "portable wailing wall", in reference to his function as liaison between minority groups and the President.¹⁴⁴

Clifford, who served Truman as special counsel from 1946 to 1950, and went on to become a successful Washington lawyer and Secretary of Defense in the 1960s, undoubtedly held great sway over the President. He became Truman's advocate in debates with the State Department over

143. Cohen, n.137, p.45.

144. Ibid., p.46.

Palestine. The memoirs of Eliahu Elath (Epstein), who served at the time as head of the Zionist Organization's Washington office, reveal that both Clifford and Niles were briefed regularly by Elath and his office. It is evident that Elath's material often provided the basis of Clifford's arguments against the State Department's view.¹⁴⁵

Much later, at the end of 1976, Clifford attempted to vindicate Truman's (and his own) Palestine policy, before a meeting of American historians. His lecture was defensive in tone, claiming that Truman had been guided by a broad national strategy, influenced heavily by humane, religious sentiment toward the Jews, in which political factors played but a minor role.¹⁴⁶

Clifford failed to mention any of the specific actions that Truman took with elections in view. Clifford is guarded enough not to mention his and or Niles connection with the Jews.

145. Ibid.

146. Clark Clifford, "Factors Influencing President Truman's Decision to support Partition and Recognize the State of Israel", in The Palestine Question in American History, (New York, 1978), p.43.

In November 1947, Clifford submitted an interesting memorandum to the President regarding the influence of the Jewish vote in the United States:

The Jewish vote, insofar as it can be thought of as a block is important only in New York. But (except for Wilson in 1916) no candidate since 1876 has lost New York and won the Presidency, and its 47 votes are naturally the first prize in any election".¹⁴⁷

Clifford memorandum, which "became the blueprint for the 1948 campaign waged by Truman," was consciously "based solely on an appraisal of the politically advantageous course to follow". Clifford wrote an apologia in 1976 and selected the following extract from the same memorandum: "In the long run, there is likely to be the greater gain if the Palestine problem is approached on the basis of reaching decisions founded upon intrinsic merit".¹⁴⁸

It is quite possible that the "Jews electoral weight" thesis was being fed to the White House regularly by the

147. Clifford, n.146, p.43.

148. Ibid. See also. J. Snetsinger, Truman, the Jewish Vote and the Creation of Israel (Stanford, 1974), pp.140, 95.

Zionist office in Washington Bernard Baruch, the Jewish financier to more than one President thought the electoral importance of the New York Jews alone outweighed by far the entire Arab lobby:

You, let me have the Jewish vote of New York and and I will bring you the head of Ibn Saud on a platter ; The administration will sell all seven Arab states if it is a question of retaining the support of the Jews of New York alone; never mind the rest of the country.¹⁴⁹

Such smouldering arrogance bears testimony to the fact that American Presidency was reduced to the whims and fancies of local electorates who could inject fear in the most powerful executive of the World. Dare you ignore us ; was the attitude among the Zionist lobbyists in America.

The role played by David Niles was same what different from that played by Clifford. Niles was the behind the scenes liaison between the President and the Zionists. The son of Russian Jewish immigrants, Niles had begun his governmental career during World War I as a clerk in the Department of Labor, graduating to administrative assistant

149. Z. Ganin, Truman, American Jewry, and Israel, 1945-1948, (New York, 1979), p.101.

to Roosevelt, specializing in minority problems. Truman kept him on, and Niles served him well during the frequent stormy episodes involving Palestine. Niles took upon himself the task to protect the President from the Zionist lobby. When the President made at a decision displeasing to the Zionists, Niles would tell them that the "career people" at the State Department had misled the White House.¹⁵⁰

Niles position in the White House was anomalous. George Elsey was U.S. Naval Reserve officer at the White House, 1942-1947 and assistant to Clifford, 1947-1949 has claimed that Niles was a most secretive individual. He rarely confided to his White House colleagues what he told the president, or what he had recommended.¹⁵¹

What made Niles and his White House connection so valuable to the Zionists was the rapport that existed between leaders of the Jewish movement and the administrative assistant. Niles worked closely with the top echelon of Zionist leadership, the Jewish Agency's Executive. Eliahu Epstein, who later changed his name to the Hebrew Eliahu Eilat, was the Jewish Agency's Executive

150. Cohen, n.137, p.49.

151. Ibid.

member and Agency's administrative arm labeled Niles as "our friend" in the White House.¹⁵² Correspondence dealing with the Jewish strategy and their battle to win Truman's favour linked lines with Epstein, Meyer Weisgal, Nahum Goldman, and Stephen Wise, all members of the powerful Executive.¹⁵³

Concerted attempts were made by the Zionists leadership to keep Niles apprised of Jewish Agency's every move. Following a private conversation with Lord Inver Chapel, the British Ambassador to the U.S.A., Nahum Goldman wrote a confidential report for distribution to members of the executive. Goldman also recommended that a copy be sent to Niles for his perusal. Accordingly, Niles was aware that Britain was likely to turn the Palestine problem over to the United Nations at the same time that Zionists learned of the plan.¹⁵⁴

A memorandum Niles wrote for the President on May 27, 1946, provides an excellent example of his advocacy of a pro-Zionist policy and his ability to use his position to ensure that the Zionist cause received hearing by the

152. Snetsinger, n.148, p.36.

153. Ibid., pp.36-37.

154. Ibid., p.37.

President. Niles advised Truman not to be disturbed from supporting Jewish claims for fear of losing the friendship of the King of Saudi Arabia. "You know that President Roosevelt said to some of the privately he could do anything that needed to be done with Ibn Saud with a few million dollars."¹⁵⁵

The person who diligently argued the Zionist cause at the higher level of government, the accolade Niles received were well deserved Moshe Sharett, while serving as the Israeli Foreign Minister reflected on the 'inestimable assistance' and far-reaching effectiveness" of Niles's 'White House labors.'¹⁵⁶ Forestal noted that the State Department was "seriously embarrassed and handicapped by the activities of Niles at the White House in join directly to the President on matters involving Palestine.¹⁵⁷

State Department: The State Department stood in opposition to the White House aides. The officials of the State Department could not reconcile what they felt to be their duty with the President's political ambitions. The

155. Ibid., p.39.

156. Ibid.

157. Ibid.

Departments innumerable warnings about the damage that would result to American interests in the Middle East if the President resorted to a policy which went against the interest of the Arabs.¹⁵⁸

Truman was cautioned by Secretary of State Edward Stettinius that the Zionists would undoubtedly try to commit the President to their own programme for Palestine. This was resented by Truman. "In their patronizing tone, appropriate from a board of senior prefects to a new boy in the lower forms, the diplomatic officers committed an indiscretion they would never live down in Truman's mind."¹⁵⁹

Truman recalled:

IN those days no body seemed to think I was aware of anything a communication from some of the striped pants' boys warning me in affect telling me to watch my step, that I did not really understand what was going on over there and that I ought to leave it to the 'experts'".¹⁶⁰

158. FRUS, Vol. VIII, 1945, 90 per cent of the section on Palestine is taken up with such warnings.

159. Grose, n.125, p.39.

160. Ibid., p.39.

When it came to Palestine the situation as it existed, was of mutual contempt between the White House and State Department. Nonetheless like Roosevelt, Truman also considered the Presidential prerogative as absolute. Both Roosevelt and Truman believed that the functions of the Cabinet stopped at giving advice. But the advisers retained their influence with him not because their membership in the Cabinet, but because of their close personal relationship with him.¹⁶¹

The State Department felt that they had been unfairly deprived of their rightful role in the policy making process. F. Wilson, the wartime head, has contemptuously remarked:

The information that the professionals gave the Presidents however, was complete and their advice was sound. Subsequent events have borne them out. It is no exaggeration to say that our relations with the entire Arab world never recovered from the events of 1947-1948, when we sided with the Jews against the Arabs.¹⁶²

161. Cohen, n.137, p.52.

162. E. Wilson, Decision on Palestine (Stanford, 1979), p.154.

The Near Eastern Division experts did not believe that Truman had even begun to grasp the essence of the issues involved. The division's Chief of Research at the time Harry N. Haward, asserted later that the President had not understood the situation in the Middle East, nor the Palestine problem nor the Balfour Declaration.¹⁶³

Nevertheless, Truman, given his understanding of Palestine and the Middle East, really did believe as he stated in his memoirs. He writes that he could at one and the same time support Zionism, protect his own political future, and safeguard the national interest in the Middle East.¹⁶⁴

The point to remember here is this, the Arab oil had not become a major factor in the economy, and the balance of mutual dependence weighed heavily in American's favour. A study of American Saudi relations during this period has concluded that the oil of Saudi Arabia and the Middle East played little, if any, role in Truman's final consideration of the Palestine problem.¹⁶⁵ However Arab oil did play a -----

163. Cohen, n.137.

164. Harry S. Truman, Memoirs, Vol. II (New York, 1956).

165. See, Aaron David Miller, Search for Security: Saudi Arabian Oil and American Foreign Policy, 1939-1949 (Chapel Hill, 1980), p.200.

significant role in the Marshal plan in European economic recovery though later on. It can be visualized that State Department deliberately exaggerated the risks of the Arabs denying their oil the West, when they knew that Ibn Saud had atleast no intention of doing such thing. This irked the President and he lifted the Palestine problem out of their domain.¹⁶⁶

On the initiative of a moderate Zionists leader, Nahum Goldmann, some interest was generated in the State Department and Pentagon for the partition of Palestine between a Jewish and an Arab state. However, the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry rejected such a departure and offered instead the possibility of a binational state. In this state "Jew shall not dominate Arab and Arab shall not dominate Jew".¹⁶⁷ Subsequent Anglo-American talks between Herbert Morrisson and Henry F. Grady refined the formula further. The Committees recommendations were basically a federal system of two autonomous states with a strong

166. Cohen, n.137, p.54.

167. The Anglo American Committee and its working has been dealt in the third chapter of this dissertation. For analysis of the recommendations of the said committee, see M.S. Agwani, The United States And The Arab World, 1945-1952, (Aligarh, 1955). See Appendices, no.I for the Text of the recommendation in the same book.

central government under British direction.¹⁶⁸ The admission of the 100,000 was made conditional upon the acceptance of the report as a whole.

Faced with the Zionist opposition Truman hesitated. However he remarked, "I cannot believe that the gap between the proposals which have been put forward is too great to be bridged by men of reason and goodwill. To such a solution our government could give its support".¹⁶⁹

Critics in Britain and America have charged that Truman could follow only the partisan politics of the United States as for example the Yom Kippur statement on the 4th October 1946 in which the President offered soothing assurances of fidelity to American Jewry on the eve of their solemn holiday.¹⁷⁰

The 4th October 1946 represented an important date in the history of the Zionist movement and British imperialism in the Middle East. In the summer and autumn of 1946 the breeze of 'partition' developed into what the British

168. Proposals for the Future of Palestine, July 1946-February 1947, Cmd, 7044 (London: HMSO, 1947), pp.3-8.

169. FRUS, 1946, VII, pp.679-82.

170. Yom Kippur statement and the British reaction has been discussed in the IIIrd chapter of this dissertation.

Ambassador in Washington, Lord Inverchapel, referred to as a 'whirl wind'. It gained great momentum when Truman etc. appeared to give support to 'the creation of a viable Jewish state in control of its own immigration and economic policies in an adequate area of Palestine instead of the whole of Palestine'.¹⁷¹ The principal drafter of the statement was Dean Acheson in the State Department and for all its comforting tone, it most specifically did not endorse the Zionist demand for a Jewish state in Palestine.¹⁷²

The President probably did not grasp all of the nuances of his own statement. If read carefully, it pleaded for compromise than as a full blown endorsement of partition. Nevertheless the American press unanimously emphasized the apart about partition, as if this only represented the President's stand. Not a single newspaper has pointed up this part of the statement, 'binding of the gap' and all the headlines carried by the papers read "Truman's Support of Jewish State".¹⁷³

171. Louis, n.139, p.439.

172. FRUS 1946, Vol. VII, pp.703-5.

173. Louis, n.139, p.439.

What dominated Truman's mind was another facet of Jewish problem that occurred after the war. There remained, a massive number of refugees, largely Jews from Eastern Europe who had no desire to return to the anti Semitism of their former homes. The State Department considered this matter separate from the Palestine tangle, but for Truman this became the heart of the matter.

This situation of the displayed persons of Europe specially brought to the fore front in such a way that it attracted President's serious attention. This episode which is one of the greatest unresearched turning points in the formulation of American's Palestine policy, known as the Harrison fact finding mission to Europe.¹⁷⁴ A few alert Zionists spotted the Harrison mission as a useful instrument in their campaign, and his views were helpful to them even though they were not justified by the facts at the time of his investigation.¹⁷⁵

Harrison Mission: Treasury Secretary Morgenthau had urged Truman during his first month in office to raise the problem of the displaced persons before the Cabinet. But the President let it drop. A short time later he agreed to the

174. Grose, n.125,p.40.

175. Ibid., See note, n.19, p.58.

proposal to send an emissary on an investigation of the DP camps.

The State Department succeeded in vetoing Morgenthau's pro Zionist candidate for this mission and nominated instead Earl G. Harrison. Recognizing in Harrison a man completely unacquainted, for all his general experience, with the particular subtleties of this mission, Meyer W. Weisgal a close associate of Weizmann suggested to Morgenthau that the envoy be accompanied by someone "thoroughly steeped in the Jewish situation". He proposed the name of Joseph J. Schwartz. Schwartz belonged to an organisation which was non Zionist, sometimes even anti Zionist. Yet Weisgal knew this man. Weisgal wrote, although Dr. Schwartz is on the staff of the J.D.C. (Joint Distribution Committee), we have absolute faith in his integrity and Zionist convictions.¹⁷⁶

It was not that Harrison was unaware of the Zionists interest converging on him. John Pehle told him frankly that his investigation had been urged by "Political Zionists" who were interested to know the desire of these people to emigrate from Europe.¹⁷⁷ He was won over by them at last. Harrison's report to Truman, submitted late in August 1945,

176. Ibid., p.41.

177. Ibid.

conveyed the DP plight in vivid terms. "We appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazis treated them, " Harrison noted (Truman underlined the passage). "They are in concentration camps in large numbers under our military guard instead of S.S. troops. One is led to wonder whether the German people, seeing this, are not supposing that we are following or at least condoning Nazi policy." Then Harrison takes a step further to make judgement about the ultimate fate of the DPs. He concluded that "Palestine is definitely and pre-eminently the first choice."¹⁷⁸

Truman made the Harrison's report public and it created a sensation. However what made the lasting impact was Harrison's political conclusion that he drew: Never before and against all the arguments of Britain and the State Department, Truman was shown that the difficulties of Europe's surviving Jews and the political future of Palestine were aspects of the same problem. Perhaps the impact of Harrison's report was great. What he saw in the Harrison's report was a moving portrait of human beings. "The misery it depicted could not be allowed to continue", he said. If Palestine was what they wanted and no other

178. Department of State, Bulletin (September 30, 1945), pp. 455-63.

country was coming forward with resettlement offers least of all the United States - then Palestine it should be."¹⁷⁹ Truman dispatched a copy of the Harrison report to the British Prime Minister Atlee, by passing all the avenues of diplomacy and saying, "The main solution appears to lie in the quick evacuation of as many as possible of the non-repatriable Jews who wish it, to Palestine. If it is to be effective such actions should not be delayed".¹⁸⁰ It is ironical that Truman wanted to disgorge the gush of humanitarian feelings towards the Jews, in Palestine at the cost of Palestinians.

There appeared to be another school of thought in the United States which consoled itself with the idea that in supporting the Zionist cause they were indirectly undermining "British imperialism" in the Middle East.¹⁸¹

However, the United States had considerable stakes in the Arab countries. The investment of capital to build oil industry there was huge. There was a lurking fear of Soviet expansionism and America shared the apprehensions with

179. Truman, n.164, p.138,

180. Ibid., p.140.

181. Agwani, n.167, p.71.

Britain. The Truman Doctrine had shifted the care of Western resistance to Moscow from London to Washington.¹⁸² Whether this important departure changed American's attitude towards the Arab countries who had been wedded to the cause of Arab Palestine ? The events which followed the submission of that problem to the United Nations suggest a negative answer.¹⁸³

182. Ibid.

183. Ibid., pp.71-72.

CHAPTER-V

SOVIET UNION, ZIONISM AND THE PALESTINE QUESTION

Jewish History in Russia Upto the Russian Revolution:

Russia was the least tolerant of the Jews from the beginning of her history.¹ Czars, being fanatic Christians, during the 15th and 16th centuries, had ruthlessly put down a movement for conversion to Judaism. The rulers of the 17th century such as Peter the Great, though moderate in his dealings with the Russian Jews, was not at all liberal. The succession of Empresses to the Russian throne was another era of fanatic policies towards them. Catherine I in 1727, Anne in 1739, and Elizabeth in 1742, all issued special decrees expelling the Jews from their domain.²

Russia got through three successive partitions of Poland (1772, 1793, 1795). Consequently, the largest chunk of that land became part of Russia. Thus Russia which was the least disposed to welcome the Jews, but ruled in the 19th century over the largest section of the Jewish people. The number of Jews in Russia equaled, if not outnumbered all other Jews combined in the world.³

The Jews now lived under Russian rule all over the Western province of the empire which were previously

1. Cecil Roth, A Short History of the Jewish People (London, 1969), p.35.

2. Ibid., p.356.

3. Ibid.

governed by Poland. The Jews living in these provinces during 18th and 19th centuries were culturally backward in comparison to the Jews living in Western Europe.⁴ They were not familiar with the famous names of West Europe's persons of eminence who were born as Prime Minister, Desraeli and Recardo. They still took recourse to their religious leaning and their intellectual field was confined to Talmud and allied literature. While wearing dresses they chose to be conservative and lagged a century behind in fashion. Barring a few rich merchants the majority of Jews were occupied in petty trading, in keeping and farming. A majority of Jewish population was miserably poor.⁵

From the very beginning the Czars of Russia adopted a policy which was to confine the Jews to the newly acquired Western provinces (Pale of Settlement) and to prevent them from spreading to other parts of the empire. On account of this policy more than twenty thousand Jews were expelled from the villages of Maghilev and Vitebsk alone.⁶ The climate made the situation worse. This was put in an impressive way by Elon:

4. Ibid., p.357.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p.358.

"nature itself joined forces with the sterile apparatus of Czarist oppression to inflict a terrible punishment on people and country alike as though for some primeval sin. Survival was an achievement".⁷

The Jews of Russia enjoyed a new lease of life with the accession of Alexander II (1855-1881). The young ruler, was described by Desraeli as 'the most benevolent prince that ever ruled in Russia'.⁸ Czar Alexander II initiated a consistent policy of reform. By mid-19th century, a sort of messianic movement appeared in Russia itself. Almost at this time Alexander II ascended the Czarist throne and a vigorous programme of reforms, including humane approach to the Jews was started.⁹ He rejected his father's policy of enforced conversion to christianity. He abolished the Jewish military cantonment, the six-year pre-conscription horror of Russian Jewish life. He permitted larger number of Jews to settle in the interior of the country. He allowed three classes of Jews to settle in that area: the merchants who

7. Amos Elon, 'The Israelis Founders and Sons, (London, 1971), p.42.

8. Roth, n.1, p.359.

9. Howard M. Sacher, 'A History of Israel, From the Rise of Zionism to our Time (Oxford, 1977), p.8.

were capable of paying heavy taxes, the graduates of Universities, and artisans recommended by the police of the Pale as 'well-behaved',¹⁰

Jews, by and large, welcomed these reforms. The liberal policy of the Czar gave acceleration to an internal cultural movement which was becoming formidable among the Jews of Eastern Europe for three generations.¹¹ The Jews started enjoying liberal ideas and freeing themselves from the webs of parochial Jewish education. This secular awakening is known in Jewish history as the 'Haskalah', the mid nineteenth century period of East European Jewish 'enlightenment'.¹²

Haskalah: 'Haskalah' is a word derived from the Hebrew 'sechel' which means intelligence or understanding. It signifies the effort of Jewish scholars and intellectuals (Maskilim) to 'enlighten' the masses of Russian Jewry.¹³ Haskalah movement was a parallel to a Jewish movement called

10. Ibid. p.8.

11. Solomon Grayzel, A History of the Jews (Philadelphia, 1948), p.606.

12. Sacher, n.9., p.8.

13. Grayzel, n.11, p.607.

'Aufklaerung', in Germany at that time. But these movements differed fundamentally and significantly. The German-movement grew in German environment and for German speaking peoples, but Haskalah was rooted in Hebrew language and thought emphasized history and theology, while Haskalah manifested itself most strikingly in Hebrew literature.¹⁴

Those days among the East European Jews there was an inner urge to self - understanding and enlightenment. These Jews were also affected by external political situation.¹⁵ For the Russian Jewish essayist, Moshe Lillienblum and for the Haskalah poet, Judah Leib Gordon, there were normalcy in sight, an enrichment to be gained from discourse with the surrounding gentile population".¹⁶ Gordon wrote, "Be a Jew at home and a man in the street. That is Jews should observe their traditions in the privacy of household and synagogue but live a full, healthy, Russian life in the outer world."¹⁷

The most influential of the early advocates of Haskalah in Russia was Issac Levinsohn (1788-1869). His thoughts were

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., p.609.

16. Sacher, n.11, p.8.

17. Ibid.

similar to what Moses Mendelssohn of Germany was preaching. Both of them laid emphasis on reason called upon the Jews to amalgamate themselves in the general culture of their time and defend Judaism, as well as to widen their mental horizon which was the need of the time and to reconstruct their economic foundations.¹⁸

The changed temper of these authors bore testimony to the fact that Alexander's reforms and prevailing liberal conditions were positively influencing the Jews. The pursuit of secular knowledge was gaining popularity among the Russian Jews. Some wealthy Jews and intellectuals organized a society for the promotion of culture among the Jews (1863) with its headquarters in St. Petersburg. Its purpose was to import secular knowledge among the Jews. "By placing its faith in cultural emancipation and secular activity on Russian soil, Haskalah literature at first de-emphasized the traditional messianic yearning for Zion".¹⁹ Zion then, as envisaged by the Haskalah writers, became a kind of mythic idyll in the words of Levinsohn, "the land where muses dwell, where each flower is a psalm, each cedar a song divine, each stone a book and each rock a tablet".²⁰

18. Grayzel, n.11, p.609.

19. Sacher, n.9., p.8.

20. Ibid., p.9.

While Alexander II was liberal towards the Jews, he was an autocratic ruler in general. The result was that terrorism emerged in Russia. In 1879 an attempt was made to blow up his train, and shortly thereafter an explosion shattered a part of his winter place. He did all to crush these revolutionaries but at the same time he tried to satisfy them by bringing about more reforms and conceding to a few of their demands. However, he fell victim to a terrorist bomb. His successor Alexander III (1881-94), showed himself a strong-willed monarch who promptly announced his intention to avenge his father's murder and to preserve the autocratic regime.²¹

The reign of Alexander III is known as the period of unprecedented oppression in modern Russian history. The new Czar saw in the ethnic minorities a constant danger to his authority. Almost immediately therefore, the non-Russian races i.e. Poles, Estonians, Latvians, Finns, Armenians and Turkmenians began to be discriminated in public employment and in educational and cultural spheres.²²

21. Wallace Ferguson & Geoffrey Brown, A Survey of European Civilization (3rd ed.), Part II (Massachusetts), p.186.

22. Sacher, n.9., p.12.

The Jews again faced great hardships on account of new rules and regulations. In 1681 a chain reaction of officially inspired pogroms started all over the densely populated Jewish hinter land of Southern Russia. On May 3, 1882 in the form of temporary regulation Alexander III issued a new series of anti-Jewish decrees. They were not however temporary as they continued in effect, with mounting stringency until the **March Revolution of 1917.**²³

These oppressions of the Russian regime did not yield the desired result.

"The more the Jews of Russia were oppressed, the more they clung to their distinct ways; the more they were thrown together into areas of forced residence of ever - diminishing size, the more they sought refuge in the narrow confines of orthodox religion or in Messianic dreams or in radical avenues of escape".²⁴

The avenues of escape for the Russian Jews were three. The most popular one was the migration to America. New York

23. Ibid.

24. Emos Elon, n.7., p.58.

was considered for these Jews a new Jerusalem beyond the seas.²⁵ Politics was the second avenue of escape. Revolution was the ultimate aim of the politically-oriented Jews. Historically, they were the most urban of all the ethnic groups of Russia and Poland. Therefore they were well versed with the nuances of politics. The third avenue of escape was Jewish nationalism. It was a reaction not only to Jewish suffering but also to the emergence of other national movements. The Jewish nationalism was very much influenced in particular by German romanticism.²⁶

Jewish Nationality and Soviet Politics : The Jews living in the Western parts of the Csarist Empire in the 19th century were possessing their own language, religion, civil administration, judicial institutions and educational system. For historical, cultural and political reasons the Jews also developed a distinctive economic and social structure. The Jewish population was confined to a limited area, the Pale of Residence which included the former Polish

25. Ibid., p.58.

26. Ibid., p.61.

provinces incorporated into the Csarist Empire in the 1770's and 1790's Bylorussia and Lithuania, the northeastern Ukraine, and areas near the Black Sea which had been colonized by the Russian in the early part of the 19th century. From among the Jews only a privilege minority of highly skilled artisans, rich merchants, certain veteran of the armed forces, and, for a time, university graduates, were permitted to live outside the Pale.

The overwhelming majority of the Jewish population was forced to reside within the Pale (Table I). Of the people who lived in that area, more than four-fifths of the Jewish population lived in urban areas, and Jews constituted nearly 40% of the urban population. One third of the Jews lived in the Shtetles, or market towns which were small semi-urban communities in which the Jews had settled in the first decade of the 19th century after being driven out of the villages by imperial edicts.²⁷

The urbanization of the Jewish population preceded the urbanization of the Slavic population of the Pale by nearly a century. Towns with a Jewish population of 10,000 to

27. Solomon M. Schwarz, The Jews in the Soviet Union (Syracuse, 1951), p.11.

second half of the 19th century. Those with Jewish populations ranging from 25,000 to 50,000 increased by 400 percent, and those with a Jewish population of over 50,000 increased by 500%. While the Jews in the various provinces of the Pale constituted between five and fifteen percent of the population, they formed between twenty five and 90% of the urban population.²⁸ In 1897 over half the urban population of Bylorussia and Lithuasia was Jewish and in the Ukraine Jews constituted nearly one third of the urban population. Outside the Pale Jewish urbanization was even more pronounced. Over 80% of the Jews living in St. Petersburg province and 90% of all Jews in the province of Moscow resided in the provincial capital.²⁹

The government restrictions placed on Jewish residence were complemented by vocational and professional restrictions Jews were excluded by law from public service. Jewish agricultural colonization, which had been growing slowly but steadily during the 19th century, was set back by the May laws of 1882, issued by Tsar Alexander III, which

28. Zvi Y. Gitelman, Jewish Nationality and Soviet Politics. The Jewish Section of the CPSU 1917-1930 (Princeton, 1972), p.18.

29. Salo W. Baron, The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets (New York, 1964), pp.82-83.

forbade Jews to acquire rural property. The 'numerous clauses' system prevented most Jews from obtaining secondary and higher education, effectively barring them from the professions, though there were some prominent Jewish attorneys. Enforced residence in the Pale prevented them from entering the heavy industries being built outside the Pale (Table II).

The overwhelming majority of Jews employed in industry and handicrafts were actually artisans who were either self-employed or worked in small factories and workshops. At the end of the 19th century, of 300,000 Jewish industrial workers, 250,000 were employed in workshops and only 50,000 were in medium and large scale factories.³⁰ Forty three percent of the artisans were in the various branches of the garment industry.³¹

The artisans and the middlemen of all types, who constituted well over half the economically active Jewish population, led precarious economic existence. Confinement within the Pale meant that economic competition was fierce. On the late 19th century in Kursk and Iarslav provinces,

30. Gitelman, n.28, p.19.

31. Ibid. p.20.

where no Jews were allowed to reside, there was less than one artisan for every thousand inhabitants. In Kiev province, within the Pale, there were 2.6 artisans for the same number of inhabitants.³²

"As a rule Jewish artisans were deprived of capital, equipment, stocks of raw materials and cheap credit facilities, and quite often worked for the account of middlemen supplying materials and accessories or acted as commission agents or subsidiary suppliers for manufacturers and wholesalers; or simply were exploited home workers as well as sweat shop sub-contractors for some what bigger jobbers".³³ No wonder that many artisans joined impoverished traders and shopkeepers in the miserable crowd of Luftmenshn, those without enough income to support themselves and their families, but with enough hope to loiter about the market square looking for the big break that only rarely came along. It was estimated that in many communities forty percent of the Jewish population consisted of Luftmenshn and their families. In 1898 nearly 20% of the

32. Louis Greenberg, The Jews in Russia (New Haven, 1944), p.166.

33. Schwarz, n.27, p.19.

Jewish population in the Pale applied for Passover Charities.³⁴ In, 1900 an investigative commission in Odessa found that 63% of the Jewish dead were buried at the expense of the Jewish community. All in all, it was estimated that at the turn of the century between 30 and 35% of the Jewish population depended on relief provided by Jewish welfare institutions.³⁵ For some of this misery was relieved by emigration from Russia, some 70% of them going to U.S. More than half of these emigrants were artisans.³⁶

Many of those who remained sought economic relief in the rapidly developing industries of the Russian Empire. In the early part of the 19th century there were only a few hundred Jewish industrial workers, but by the turn of the century there were approximately 50,000. In cities such as Odessa, Vilna, Bialystok, Warsaw, and Lodz, the Jewish proletariat was a social and economic force to be reckoned with. Jews were concentrated in light industry, particularly in the related textile and garment industries. A micro study

34. Baron, n.29, pp.114-115.

35. Schwarz, n.27, p.18.

36. Yakhinson, n.31, p.20.

of the Jewish Labor structure is provided by the statistics for the city of Bialystok in 1887 (Table III).

The Jewish workers suffered all the disabilities of a laboring class in an industrializing, early capitalist social and economic order. Working hours were incredibly long, wages abysmally low, conditions abominably oppressive. In Gomel in the late 1890's the working day was 16 to 17 hours; in Minsk sugar refining factories in the early 1900's Jewish girls worked a twenty-hour day; in Dubravna weavers also worked a twenty-hour day. In 1900 the average worker's wage was twenty four rubles a month.³⁷ Workers were frequently what were non-views their conditions not paid on time and sanitary conditions in the factories and workshop were very bad.

Despite political and economic discrimination a few individual Jews managed to attain economic affluence and social influence. In 1904 Jews owned on third of all sugar factories in the Ukraine. On the eve of World War I Jewish-owned factories were producing 52% of all the sugar produced in the Ukraine.³⁸ Jews were also prominent in the

37. Gitelman, n.28, p.22.

38. Ibid., p.23

development of water transport, the oil industry and in banking.³⁹ In 1914 sizable number of the directors of St. Petersburg banks were Jews.

These men represented only a very thin layer of the privileged, while the great majority of Jews remained imprisoned within the Pale and its poverty, a self-contained and distinct community. But there were signs which showed that the cultural isolation of the Jews was being slowly eroded. The Haskalah, or Enlightenment movement of the early and mid- nineteenth century had preached acculturation into the dominant Russian Culture. Some had heeded to this call and had gone so far as to convert to Russian orthodoxy and assimilate completely.⁴⁰ The programs of the 1800's had halted this trend, as Jews turned away from a culture which they perceived as not only alien but also hostile. In 1898 there were 375,000 children in Jewish religious schools, or kheders, six times as many as the number of Jews enrolled in Russian schools.⁴¹ In 1897 ninety seven percent of the Jewish population listed Yiddish as their mother tongues. At

39. Baron, n.29, pp.105-11.

40. Ibid.

41. Gitelman, n.28, p.47.

the same time, however, over thirty percent of Jewish men and 16% of Jewish women could read the Russian language, while only 21% of the general population was literate.⁴² Whereas in 1886 only 29,526 Jews had attended Russian schools. By 1911, 126,976 Jewish students were enrolled in such schools.⁴³ As late as 1840 only 48 Jews were enrolled in Russian primary schools and secondary schools, and only 15 attended universities. It were these people, having made contact with the world beyond the Pale, who first became aware of the possibilities of modernization, secularization, and assimilation. Nearly all of them felt a need to involve themselves in the economic social and cultural life around them, and many participated in political life as well. This made them painfully aware of the backwardness of Russia and her Jewish population. Most were convinced that with entities were in desperate need of modernization. As regards the Jewish people, some believed that modernization could be achieved only through

42. Schwarz, n.27, p.13. The literacy of the general population is discussed in Michael T. Florinsky, Russia: A History and Interpretation (New York), 1961, vol. II.

43. As late as 1840 only 48 Jews were enrolled in Russian primary schools and secondary schools, and only 15 attended Universities. Baron, n.29, pp.143-45.

secularization and assimilation; others agreed upon the need for secularization, but rejected assimilation; still others argued that modernization could be attained at the cost of only limited secularization of certain areas of life, and no assimilation at all. The assimilators would either convert to Christian faith and thereby remove the legal and social impediments to their complete integration into Russian society, or they would simply adopt the Russian culture and try as best they could to integrate themselves into whatever segment of Russian society they chose. If they had a taste for politics, they were likely to join either liberal or revolutionary movements which pursued broad objectives and which only incidentally concerned themselves with "the Jewish question" if at all. Those who rejected assimilation but aimed at the modernization of the Jewish population devised various strategies for the attainment of their objectives. These strategies were crystallized into programmes formulated and enunciated by political parties.

The first political party to attempt a synthesis of general political goals, whose attainment would ensure both the modernization of the Jewish and general populations and the preservation of Jewish identity, was the General League of Jewish Workingmen in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia known

as the "Bund".⁴⁴ The Bund was a Marxist party which, for a time, was an integral part of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP), through it ran afoul of that party's - and particularly Lenin's - ideas on the organisation of the party and of the future socialist state. The Bund's position and its historical evolution had profound implications for the nature and structure of the Russian Social' Democratic Labor Party - and perhaps for the course of Russian history as well as for the Bolshevik policy toward the Jews in Russia. It was in the course of his struggles with the Bund that Lenin concretized his organisational theories. The conflict with the Bund moulded and trained the highly disciplined, cohesive monolithic party which came to be identified as a uniquely "Leninist" one. This some experience helped shape the future of Russian Jewry. Consciously rejecting the Bund's national programme for the Jews, the Bolsheviks tried to formulate a policy which would preclude a recrudescence of Bundist notions and aspirations among the Jewish masses, while at the same time achieving the economic, political and cultural modernization of

44. The name was originally "General League of Jewish Workingmen in Russia and Poland". It was elaborated in 1901. Ferdinand Lassalles "Allgemeiner Deulscher Arbeiterbund" was the inspiration for the name.

Russian Jewry and their integration into the Soviet polity. In the pre-revolutionary period RSDLP policy was based on the naive belief that the revolution would solve the Jewish problem automatically. Since the Jewish problem was created by the injustices of the capitalist order and the idea of Jewish nationhood was but an exaggerated response to these injustices, both anti-Jewish discrimination and the "unscientific" notion of Jewish nationhood would be swept away by the majestic, impartial, liberating winds of Revolution.⁴⁵ Gitelman has written,

"The revolution did indeed come but both the Jewish people and the Jewish problem refused to go away. Confronted with these facts the Bolsheviks adjusted to them rather gracefully. A highly pragmatic Jewish policy was evolved the specifics of which were dealt with by the Jewish sections of the Soviet Communist party. But this did not end the conflict between socialist and national aspirations, it merely shifted its locale." ⁴⁶

The history of the Jewish sections, and indeed the history of Soviet Jewry, is one of constant balancing

45. Gitelman, n.28, pp.25-26.

46. Ibid. p.26.

adjustment, and coordination of Jewish national motives and ideals with those of Communist ideology in its Soviet expression. Many of the Jewish sections' activists were former Bundists, and within the sections the old disputes and the old alignments on the national question continued. Further more, the Jewish sections in effect implemented for the party a national programme which could easily be construed as the heretical national - cultural autonomy of the Bund. This irony was compounded by the fact that Lenin's writings on the Bund and on the claims of the Jews to nationhood were taken much more seriously by ex Bundist in the Jewish sections than they were taken by the Communists Party as a whole. Stained with original sin, the Ex-Bundist felt obliged to be more catholic than the Pope and to pursue their national programme, with the greatest caution, even when urged to hold actions by other Party leaders. For these reasons, in order to understand the history of the Jewish Sections - in Russian, the *Evsekl'su* (or *Evsekt'sia*, the singular form commonly used in Soviet Russia, even in reference to many sections) - it is necessary to examine the evolution of the national programme of the Bund and Lenin's criticism of it.⁴⁷

47. Ibid., pp.26-27.

TABLE I

**REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE JEWISH POPULATION IN THE
RUSSIAN EMPIRE 1887***

Region	Jewish Population		Jewish Percentage of total Population
	Thousands	%	
In the Pale Poland (10 Provinces)	1321.1	25.3	14.5
North West (3 Lithuanian and 3 Bilorussian provinces)	1422.4	27.3	14.1
South West (Ukraine West of the Dnieper-4 provinces and Bessarabia)	1768.6	33.9	12.4
Southeast (Ukraine East of the Dnieper - 3 provinces and the Crimea)	387.2	7.4	4.5
Total 25 provinces	4899.3	93.9	11.6
Outside the Pale	316.5	6.1	0.4
Grand Total	5215.8	100.0	4.1

* Solman M. Schwarz, The Jews in the Soviet Union
(Syracuse, 1951), p.11.

TABLE-II
OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF JEWS, 1897*

Occupation	Percentage of Economically Active Jews
Industry and Handicrafts	36.3
Traders, Storekeepers, peddlers etc.	31.0
Manual Labourers, domestics, private employees	11.5
Official and professionals	4.7
Communication and transport	3.0
Agriculture	2.4
Profession Unspecified	7.6
Military	3.5
	----- 100.0 -----

* As cited in Zvi Y. Gitelman, Jewish Nationality and Soviet Policies. The Jewish Section of the CPSU 1917-1930 (Princeton, 1972), p.19.

TABLE-III
JEWISH WORKERS IN BIALYSTOK, 1887*

Type of Factory	Number of Factories	Workers		Total	Percentage of Jews
		Jews	Christian		
Textile	60	774	449	1223	63
Weaving	4	101	117	218	48
Dyes	4	88	95	183	48
Shawls & Scarves	9	276	123	399	69
Blankets	2	27	25	52	54
Gloves & Stockings	2	12	-	12	100
Tobacco	4	527	-	527	100
Pigskin Products	3	162	-	162	100
Breweries	1	10	-	10	100
Tanneries	1	20	4	24	84
Box Making	1	41	-	41	100
Lumber Mills	1	10	1	11	91
Machine Shops	4	20	1	21	95
Flour Mills	3	27	10	37	73
Total	99	2095	825	2820	72

* As cited in Zvi Y. Gitelman, Jewish Nationality and Soviet Politics. The Jewish Section of the CPSU 1917-1930 (Princeton, 1972), p.22.

The Jews in Russian Revolution:

When Czarism fell in March 1917 one of the first acts of its successor, the Provisional Government, was to abolish all legal restrictions on the Jews. 'All the limitations on the rights of Russian citizens imposed by hitherto existing laws on the basis of religion, creed or nationality are hereby revoked', the government's decree stated. This was followed by an extraordinary political and cultural efflorescence amongst the millions of Russian Jews. This was unprecedented, but very short lived, two years at most.⁴⁸

It is difficult to give a precise estimate of the number of Jews under Czarist rule at the outbreak of the Revolution. According to 1897 census 5.25 million Jews resided in the Russian empire. According to an estimate of the Jewish Statistical Society (Petrograd, 1917), 3,837,000 Jews lived in European Russia (excluding the Kingdom of Poland which until the war formed part of the Russian empire), in the areas not conquered by the Germans. In the Caucasuses; Siberia, and Central Asia, the 1897 census recorded a population of 105,000 Jews constituted slightly

48. S.Ettinger, 'The Jews in Russia at the outbreak of Revolution' in Lionel Kochan, The Jews in Soviet Russia since 1917, (ed.), (London, 1970), p.14.

over 50 per cent of the combined urban population of Lithuania and White Russia. The census of 1897 also showed that in the Ukraine the Russians formed 35.5% of the urban population followed by the Jews (30%) and Ukrainians (27%).⁴⁹

As soon as the Revolution broke out, the mutual aid societies (which had grown in the years of wartime hardship) began to take soundings with a view to summoning a national congress of Russian Jews. The Jewish political parties, too, awoke to new life, after years of weakness in the years preceding the war and during the war itself. The socialist parties (the Bund, the 'United' Poale Zion), the Zionists and even the religious camp were flooded with new members. These parties redrafted their programmes, established new branches and new institutions, and embarked on a wide range of activities. Most of the Jewish bodies saw that the first essential thing was to summon a nation-wide Russian-Jewish Congress. This was to create autonomous institutions for Russian Jewry and frame demands from the state, in anticipation of the meeting of that constituent assembly dreamt of by most of Russia's liberal and revolutionary

49. Ibid.

parties. At the local level, communities were soon set up in towns and villages, and their institutions were democratically elected by the local Jews. The same period saw the awakening and flourishing of journalism and publishing in Russian, Hebrew and Yiddish, and the establishment of a comprehensive system of Jewish education, from kindergarten to teachers' seminary. All the while, in the political developments of the turbulent period, and in the leadership of the main political parties, Jews played a prominent part. This period in the history of Russian Jewry has not yet been properly investigated.⁵⁰

How could this development be accounted for ? There had been no preparation among the Jewish public in earlier years. The very legal existence of Jews had ceased to be recognized by the authorities in 1844. In a memorandum presented to the government by a committee for Jewish affairs at the time it was stated that the Jews did not cooperate with the authorities. They lived according to the Talmud, regarded their residence in Russia as exile, and

50. The introductions by V. Slutski and Ch. Shmeruk to Jewish Publications in the U.S.S.R., 1917-1960 issued by the Historical Society of Israel, Jerusalem, 1961, give some idea of the range of publications.

awaited the coming of the Messiah.⁵¹ In the 1840s the Jews of Russia had no cultural or public organisation or any periodical of their own. Only a few individual Jews of that day attended schools and universities. Even in the last years of the century, only 1% of the Jews in the country gave Russian as their mother tongue: for 97% it was Yiddish. The same census, in 1897, revealed that only 24.6% of the Jewish population could read and write in Russian.⁵²

What, then, were the factors that led to the extraordinary, unexpected activity of Russian Jews in 1917? It is clear that one factor was the sudden end to long as continued oppression, combined with the immediate release of hitherto suppressed economic and social forces. Other factors were the attitude of the Russian Government and Russian society to the Jews, the demographic and economic changes among the Jews themselves since the beginning of the 19th century, and their own social and ideological development.

51. Lionel Kochan, The Jews in Social Russia since 1917 (ed.), (London, 1970), p.15.

52. Ettinger, n.48, p.19.

The Jewish question had become one of the central political questions of Russia in the 20th century - the touch-stone of difference between reactionary and progressive. The struggle sharpened and the situation of the Jews worsened when the World War I broke out, particularly after the defeats suffered by the Russian army on the eastern front. The Czarist government sought to explain away these defeats by blaming 'traitors' disloyal to Russia chief among them the Jews.

The situation of the Jews was desperate; clearly, only the fall of the Czarist regime could save them. The feelings of relief with which they greeted the February Revolution, the fall of the Czar, and the assumption of power by liberal leaders can be easily understood. The Jews of Russia were in a state of terror and Messianic expectation, and the deliverance from oppression that came with the revolution burst all bounds and gave impetus to a huge independent Jewish activity.⁵³

What forms did the political and social activity of Russian Jewry take at that time ? It will not be possible to

53. Ibid.

judge of that action unless we try to uncover its deeper roots. Jewish political thought took shape mainly in medieval Europe, when the Jews were allotted the place a religious - social corporation within general society. The Jewish community in Europe developed from co-operation between a Jewish leadership that was concerned with maintaining internal discipline in the Jewish society, and the authorities who saw that leadership as a means of achieving fiscal objectives and as a tool for administrative control of the Jews. The co-operation between the Jewish leaders and the authorities became the distinguishing mark of the Jewish legal status in the eyes of the surrounding people and sometimes caused great suffering to the Jews in times of outbreak of riots. Within Jewish society also, reliance on the government and loyalty to it became a clear and established tend.

The change came with the appearance of Hassidic movement in the second half of the 18th century, and with the increased support given by the governments of Russia and Austria to the plans of the Jewish Maskilim (followers of the enlightenment) to weaken internal Jewish autonomy. The Jewish public reacted with great hostility to these trends and to the intervention of the government in its internal

affairs. The Haskalah (enlightenment) movement among eastern Europe Jewry was confined to a small section of the rich and part of the youth, and did not reach the mass of Jewry. In 1870s and 1880s enlightened young Jews were already devoting then other to political and social movements utterly opposed to that cooperation with the authorities preached by the Maskilim of the previous generation. Some of these young people turned to the Russian revolutionary movement and became an important element in it; others became leaders of the Jewish national movement, still others began to work for socialism among the Jews, in their own language, emphasizing their specific problems.⁵⁴

A deep ideological gulf divided the holders of these opinions. No reconciliation was possible between those who sought as revolutionary change in the existing political order of Russia and those who despaired of Russia entirely and saw redemption in the establishment of a special Jewish state. There was, however, one similarity between the opposing groups. The common factor was that both distrusted the government's intentions towards the Jews and saw it as a hostile element without which or against which - the solution of the 'Jewish' problem would have to come.

54. Ibid. p.24.

When the first Zionist Congress met in Basle in 1897 and in the same year the first all-Russian Congress of the Bund (The Jewish Social Democratic Union) took place, giving expression to both national and social radicalism, the enthusiasm around among the Jews of Russia was vast and over-whelming. It was as though, overnight almost, this great mass of people had awoken from its political slumber and had begun to develop ideologies, examine political programmes, and even establish political groups and parties, workers' funds, trade unions and mutual aid societies".⁵⁵ It was not long before the efforts were made to merge national and social radicalism into the one movement of Zionist - Socialist ideology.

The Kishinev pogrom of March 1903 marked another turning point in this process. It then became clear to the Jews that government was indifferent to the preservation of public order and Jewish lives. At this juncture there originated Jewish secret organizations in self-defence. The Revolution of 1905-7 gave sharp and far-reaching expression to this movement.

55. Ibid. p.25.

This was a period of revival and ferment in the political life of Russia; councils, unions and political parties were built, strikes multiplied, demonstration were held, armed rebellions arose. In all these events the Jews played a leading part. The non-socialist elements among them combined into the Union for the Attainment of Equal Rights for Russian Jewry. Their aim was to prepare a plan for the national organisation of all Russian Jews; they also wished to establish a 'club' of Jewish representatives within the Duma, or at least to instruct these representatives on questions affecting the Jews. The Jewish members of the Duma were chosen from all Russian lists, and it was necessary to reach an agreed position on Jewish matters.⁵⁶

The socialist forces among the Jewish public organized strikes and demonstrations, and set up fighting squads to repel the pogrom. The years of the Russian Revolution thus served as a new stage in the public awakening of the Jews of Russia; they began to organize for action in the political sphere and through their strength came to realize that they must take their fate into their own hands.⁵⁷

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

The political coup of June 1907, that limited yet further the powers of the Duma, dealt revolutionary and liberal forces in Russia a bitter blow. It also silenced the political activities. The outbreak of the World War I intensified their despair. The pent-up forces within Russian Jewry were only waiting for a political change in order to renew their social and political activity with great vigour. The change came, when the Revolution broke out in February 1917.⁵⁸

The renewed activity in conditions of freedom derived from the experience gained in the Revolution of 1905. It was clear to many Jews representing various sections of the Jewish public that the Jewish people of Russia was a separate national unit whose rights must be secured. All the spokesmen of the Jewish parties saw the future of Russia as a federation of free nations, enjoying autonomy within the wider political framework. They first planned to summon a Congress of elected representatives of the whole of Russian Jewry (the All - Russian Jewish Congress) which would draw up the political programme. The main debates centered on the precise form and limits of national autonomy, on the links

58. Ibid., p.26.

with other sections of the Jewish people, outside the borders of Russia, and on the attitude to the Zionist idea, i.e. the effort to establish an independent Jewish state in the land of Palestine. In the elections to the Congress in which only small section of Russian Jewry took part, the Zionists and the religious groups won a decisive majority. The election to democratic communities set up in many places produced similar results. The Zionist influence grew even stronger when the Balfour Declaration was published in November 1917. It swept Russian Jewry to a peak of enthusiasm. The socialists only constituted a minority though they were dynamic and they had close connections with Russian political parties and those of other national groups inhabiting the empire.⁵⁹

Two powerful forces opposed the vision of a federal Russia granting autonomy to all its peoples. the separatist ambitions of some nations, notably the Ukrainian, within whose borders lived most of Russia's Jews, formed one source of opposition. The second was the centralizing tendency of the Bolshevik party, though in theory it recognized the

59. Ibid., pp.26-27.

right of peoples to national autonomy.⁶⁰ The Jewish parties in 1917 went some of the way with the Ukrainian parties, in the hope that the latter would not finally, sever their connections with Russia. Their hopes were in vain: Ukrainian separatists not only cut themselves off from Russia and took up arms against Russia; in the process they perpetrated mass murders of Ukrainian Jews.⁶¹

Only the utter failure of the Ukrainian attempt at independence restored the Jews to security and, for most part, to the boundaries of Russia. But most crucial for the fate of Russian Jewry was the policy of the Bolsheviks.

Soviet Theory on the Jews

Soviet theory on the Jews proceeds from the theories of nationality and religion. These are logical and simple in principle but the more they are pursued in detail the more complex and self contradictory they become. So far as the theory of national minorities is concerned, this problem has been solved by the construction of socialism which ends the

60. E.H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, (London, 1950), Vol. I, pp.286-279.

61. See J. S. Reshetar, The Ukrainian Revolution (Princeton, 1952).

exploitation of minor nationalities by abolishing the exploiting classes of all Soviet nationalities. They now consist of state industrial workers, Kolkhoz peasants, and intellectuals, working harmoniously, irrespective of nationality, in the common aim of constructing communist society.⁶²

Socialism encourages for strictly socialist purposes, the flowing of national cultures, but in mature communist society the national culture will be absorbed in a common culture to which all will have contributed. However, each nation has its own state, a Union or Autonomous Republic within the U.S.S.R. Before the Revolution, the struggle for national equality of rights must subserve the class struggle which is the engine of Revolution. After the legal and practical granting of national equality by the revolutionary state it must subserve the construction of socialism, and subsequently of full communism, which is the *raison d'être* of the revolutionary state.

As for religion, this is a set of irrational beliefs and practices deriving from the need to make life tolerable

62. Jacob Miller, 'Soviet Theory on the Jews', in Lionel Kochan in The Jews in Soviet Russia since 1917 (ed.) (London, 1970), pp.45-46.

in the conditions of alienation and exploitation of class society. Religion in the U.S.S.R. is thus a survival from earlier periods which must disappear in the conditions of the rational society which will provide fully for the needs of the human personality. The Jews satisfy the theory of religion, but not that of nationality, since they live scattered throughout Soviet territory and thus cannot have their own state. In any case, for the same reason they are undergoing rapid assimilation and therefore do not need a national state within the U.S.S.R. It has been, and is, open to the Soviet Jews to dwell in a compact territory of their own within the U.S.S.R., namely the autonomous region of Biro Bidzhan, but they have not chosen to do so. The existence of the state of Israel is irrelevant, accordingly except that as an arm of American and British Imperialism, which seeks to subvert Soviet Jews. Its language, the traditional religious vehicle of Jewry, is also reactionary.⁶³

Elaborate Treatment of the Jewish Question: An elaborate and comprehensive theory on the Jews is difficult because that

63. Ibid.

there only a few systematic expositions in classical Marxism, pre-revolutionary Bolshevism, or in the Soviet Period.⁶⁴ The most systematic classical treatment was a review written by the young Marx in 1843, well before the main features of Marxism as a system were formulated.⁶⁵ This is a long review, entitled "Zur Judenfrage" of some writings by Bruno Bauer. The review was written when Karl Marx was twenty five years old and appeared in his *Deutsch - Franzosische Jahrbucher* in 1844. This document has been and remains something of an embarrassment to Marxists because of its apparent extreme antisemitism. Marx identifies Judaism or Jewry as the embodiment of huckstering and the power of money generally. The Jews thus represent an element which has destroyed the cohesion of society, replacing the proper relation of the human personality to other people and to things by the mediating factor of the market and of money, which atomizes society. In the second part of the review, Marx dealt with an article by Bauer on "The Capacity of Present Day Jews and Christians to Become Free". His solution is a return of the Jews to social cohesion. This

64. Ibid.

65. The review is translated and annotated by T.B. Bottomore in his Karl Marx, Early Writings (London, 1963).

involves the elimination of Judentum, which has conquered Christendom. "The Document bristles with statements pitnily and strikingly expressed, which at their face value are oddly similar to the most extreme anti-Semitic views and could provide excellent slogans in the service of anti-Semitism."⁶⁶ Marx wrote:

* What is the worldly cult of the Jew ?
Huckstering. What is his worldly god ? Money.

* In the Final analysis the emancipation
of the Jews is the emancipation of mankind
from Judaism.'

* Money is the Jealous god of Israel,
beside which no other god may exist.... The
god of the Jew has been secularized and has
become the god of this world. The bill of
exchange is the real god of the Jews'.

* The chimerical nationality of the Jew is
the nationality of the trader and above all of
the financier.'

* The tenacity of the Jew is to be
explained, not by his religion, but rather by
the human basis of his religion - practical
need and egoism.'

66. Miller, n.62, p.47.

These apparently anti-Semitic denunciations of Marx, though embarrassing due to their being in extreme terms, can be accommodated in the Marxist theory. Marx in his younger days was highly Hegelian in his style and he used the concepts of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Here we may interpret that alienation of the Jews which they wanted to maintain as a separate identity can be taken as thesis which Marx wanted to advance through an antithesis of the negation of alienation and to develop it into synthesis of social cohesion. Marx's thesis is that the Jews like the Gentiles, can become fully human again only by the restoration of social cohesion under the Gentiles. This is, the effect, the Soviet thesis that socialism is the only way of solving the Jewish problem.

The Jewish Nationality Question: An early as 1903, Lenin wrote in the Party's central organ, Iskra (The Spark) that the very idea of a Jewish nationality was 'manifestly reactionary', and in conflict in the interests of the Jewish proletariat'. Ten years later this theme was reasserted by Stalin in the pamphlet 'Marxism and the National Question'.

The main document in Bolshevik thought on the Jews before 1917 is Stalin's essay of 1913, Marxism and the

National Question.⁶⁷ This represented the authoritative Bolshevik view. This was also consistent with Lenin's occasional observations on the subject. It received Lenin's approve and was in fact written under his guidance when the Bolsheviks were clarifying their basic policy on national minorities.⁶⁸

According to this document Stalin firmly denies the status of nationhood to Jews since they lack certain constituents of nationality as conceived by him. He writes, "A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture".⁶⁹

Stalin asks:

...what...national cohesion there be...between the Georgian, Daghestanian, Russian and American Jews ?.... If there is anything common to them left it is their religion, their common origin and certain relics of national character... But how can it be seriously maintained that petrified religious

67. Stalin, Marxism and the National and Colonial Question (London), Martin Lawrence, no date).

68. Miller, n.62, p.48.

69. Stalin, n.67, p.8.

rites and fading psychological relics affect the 'fate' of these jews more powerfully than the living social, economic, and cultural environment that surrounds them? And it is only on this assumption that it is generally possible to speak of the Jews as a single nation.⁷⁰

The Jews in Russia are heading for inevitable assimilation. Not only do they possess no integral territory but the fact of the matter is primarily that among the Jews there is no large and stable stratum associated with the soil, which would naturally constitute the nation, serving not only as its 'frame work' but also as a 'national market'. Of the five or six million Russian Jews, only three to four percent are connected with agriculture in any way. The remaining 96 per cent are employed in trade, industry, town institutions and in general they live in towns; moreover they are spread all over Russia and do not constitute a majority in a single province.

Thus, interspersed as national minorities in areas inhabited by other nationalities, the Jews, as a rule serve 'foreign' nations as manufacturers and traders and as

70. Ibid. p.10.

members of the free professions, naturally adopting themselves to the 'foreign nations' in respect to language and other things. All this, taken together with the increasing reshuffling of nationalities characteristic of developed forms of capitalism, leads to the assimilation of the Jews. The abolition of the Pale would only serve to hasten this process.⁷¹

It is the process of inevitable assimilation which creates a struggle against it, reflected in the policy of the Bund for Jewish national autonomy.

If there is no democracy in the country there can be no guarantee of 'the complete freedom of cultural development of nationalities'. One may say with certainty that more democratic a century is the fewer are the 'attempts' made on the 'freedom of nationalities, and the greater are the guaranties against such 'attempts'. Russia is a semi Asiatic country and therefore in Russia the policy of 'attempts' not infrequently assumes the grossest form, the form of programs.

71. Ibid., p.36.

The Bund's aim of securing special Jewish rights, such as Saturday as the day of rest, is retrogressive:

It is to be expected that the Bund will take another 'forward step' and demand the right to observe all the ancient Hebrew holidays... The maintenance of everything Jewish, the preservation of all the national peculiarities of the Jews, even those that are patently noxious to the proletariat, the isolation of the Jews from everything non-Jewish, even the establishment of special hospitals - that is the level to which the Bund has such.⁷²

Stalin freely accepts the principle of cultural right: "There can be no possibility of a full development of the intellectual faculties of the Tatar or Jewish worker if he is not allowed to use his native language at meetings and lectures, and if his schools are closed down".⁷³ But this point is made with a warning that the struggle for minority rights is, under the conditions of rising capitalism always a struggle of the Bourgeoisie of the minority nation against that of the dominant nation, a struggle into which the proletariat of the minority is drawn by its bourgeoisie 'And this creates a favourable soil for the lying propaganda

72. Ibid., p.42.

73. Ibid., p.17.

regarding "harmony of interests", for glossing over the class interests of the Proletariat and for the intellectual enslavement of the workers. This creates a serious obstacle to the work of uniting the workers of all nationalities.⁷⁴ However, Stalin does not go quite so far as the then traditional social democrat attitude on the question of national cultures.

The Russian social democratic view, which the Bund contradicted by its tendencies to preserve and stimulate Jewish culture, amounted to the abolition of all ethnic restrictions and inequalities but without stimulating or endeavouring to preserve national cultures, because their existence hindered international working class solidarity. This view reflected the cosmopolitan education of the more articulate Bolshevik leaders and their impatience with any obstacles to the unity of the proletariat throughout the Russian empire, and indeed the world. Lenin's statements of this position with reference to the Jews are particularly pungent, not only because they are made in the struggle against Bundist particularism as a betrayal of Marxism. He and his type saw the Jewish traditional ethos as the extreme

74. Ibid.

embodiment of backward exclusiveness. Assimilation meant more than the emancipation of Jews. The construction of socialism takes precedence over the national ideal, even if it leads to complete assimilation. The overriding task is to assist the Jewish masses to take part in the building of socialism.

Biro - Bidzhan Project: The Jews did not constitute majority in any of the Republics of the Soviet union, the Autonomous Republics, Autonomous Regions, or National Areas. They are dispersed all over the country and constitute a minority in all those territories which together form the Soviet Union. This according to the theories of Lenin and Stalin on the nationality problem, which still influence Russian policy, the Jews are not a nation in spite of their official designation as a nationality.

The Soviet leaders had the realization, during the first decade after the Revolution, the great hardship in which the Jewish community was placed. The problem was aggravated by the economic disaster which affected many Jews in the Ukraine and Byelorussia - their main places of concentration - as a result of the First World War.

The idea that the Jews should take up agriculture and enjoy a measure of territorial concentration was actively encouraged by Mikhail Kalinin, the then President of the U.S.S.R. A special committee was established to give assistance to those Jew who were prepared to go back to the land. Another mass voluntary organisation - 'Ozet' was formed to assist Jews who wished to become farmers. Special areas in the Southern Lukraine were designated for this purpose. Three Jewish national districts were established in the Kherson and Dnepropetrovsk regions and two in the Crimea.⁷⁵ Since there was a very acute competition for land in these areas very few Jews could be absorbed. Moreover the nature Ukrainian and Tatar populations were hostile to the invading Jews. Anti-Semitic propaganda was widespread amongst the peasantry, which the Soviet authorities combated with great vigour.⁷⁶

Settlement of the Jews in Biro-Bidzhan was another project to 'normalize' the Jewish position in the U.S.S.R through territorial concentration. Three major reasons

75. Solomon Rabinovich, Jews in the Soviet Union (Moscow, 1967), p.45.

76. Chimen Abramasky, The Biro-Bidzhan Project in Lionel Kochan, in The Jews in Soviet Russia since 1917, (ed.), (London, 1970), p.68.

guided an experiment whose purpose was the establishment of a Jewish autonomous region in the Soviet Far East. One was to bring about a solution of Russia's Jewish problem by giving the Jews a homeland and creating a Jewish nation. The second reason was to arouse sympathy among Jewish communities abroad for the project of a "Soviet Jewish State". The third was to increase the defence potential of the U.S.S.R. by recruiting settlers for an exposed Far Eastern recruiting settlers for an border area.⁷⁷

The Biro-Bidzhan project was received with greater enthusiasm in certain Jewish circles abroad than in Moscow or Kiev. "In the light of growing anti-Semitism in Europe and the increasing restriction on Jewish immigration into Palestine, the new project was looked upon as a chance for a national life in the Soviet Union, a new hope for Jewry in the U.S.S.R., where Jewish life was on the decline since the communist revolution".⁷⁸ Dr Chaim Weizmann, the President of the World Zionist Organisation - greeted the Biro-Bidzhan plan as a 'station' on the road to the Jewish homeland in Palestine. But subsequent events have proved that life in

77. S. Levenberg, 'Soviet Jewry: Some Problems and Perspectives' in Lionel Kochan, The Jews in Soviet Russia since 1917 (ed.), (London, 1970).

78. Ibid.

the Far East had little national appeal for Soviet Jewry.⁷⁹

In 1942 Biro-Bidzhan had a population of 100,000 due to the influx during the war of people of whom less than a half were Jews.⁸⁰ But the area never became an important centre of Jewish agricultural settlement, because urbanisation proceeded at a quick pace and more than a quarter of its population lived in the capital. According to 1959 census the Jews occupied only 8.8% of the whole population.

Why are there so few Jews in Biro Bidzhan? The following reply was given by a Jewish contributor to the official Soviet Novosti Agency:⁸¹

By the end of the thirties, especially in the War years, there was no longer any need for Jews with jobs to move. Why should a person living in Vinnitsa, Kiev or Sverdlovsk, leave a place where he has lived for a long time give up his permanent job, and acquaintances? There may have been other reasons. And, of course, Soviet power is not to blame for the fact that tens of thousands and not hundreds of thousands went to Biro-Bidzhan.

79. B.Z. Goldberg, The Jewish Problem in the Soviet Union (New York, 1961), p.174.

80. W. Kolarz, Russia and her Colonies, (London, 1952), pp.174-75.

81. Rabinovich, n.75, p.29.

Who, then, is to blame ? whatever the answer, the fact is that the attempts at Jewish territorial concentration ended in failure.

This lack of a Jewish national centre puts the large Jewish community in the U.S.S.R., into a category of its own. Its situation cannot be compared with any of the national groups which form a majority in one of the territorial units of the Soviet Union.

Another factor which has no important impact on the position of the Jewish population -- apart from the lack of territorial centre -- is its special socio-economic structure. Whereas 45 percent of the inhabitants of the U.S.S.R. lived in rural areas⁸² 96 percent of the Jews resided in urban centres⁸³. In the mid -1930 over 10 percent of the Jewish working population was engaged in agriculture.⁸⁴

However, Biro-Bidzhan project failed In April 1958 Khrushcher gave an interview to the correspondent of the

82. U.S.S.R. in Figures, p.7 as cited in S.Levenberg, n.77, p.35.

83. J.P.Cole, Geography of the U.S.S.R. (Penguin, 1967), pp.63-4.

84. Rabinovich, n.75, pp.57-8.

French newspaper Figaro, in which he stated that the Biro Bidzhan project failed because Jews were incapable of collective work; they were individualists and not inclined to do agricultural work.⁸⁵

The project, born of contradictory trends in policy, executed haphazardly, and without due consideration for Jewish feelings and sentiments, was doomed to failure.

U.S.S.R. and Zionism:

When the Bolshevik Party came to power in October 1917, there already existed a powerful deep-rooted Zionist movement.

Among the Russian Jewry Zionism as an idea and as a movement predates Herzt's Judenstaat and the emergence of the World Zionist Organisation. The early writings of Perez Smolenskin, Moshe-Leib Lilienblum, and Leon Pinsker, contained nearly all the basic elements of the classical Zionist concept. The first conference of Hovevei Zion (Lovers of Zion) met at Katowicz in 1884, thirteen years before the first Zionist Congress in Basle, and practical

85. S. Levenberg, n.77, p.74.

colonization work in Palestine started even before that date. There were in Russia at that time some 80 Hovevei Zion groups in 50 towns.⁸⁶ The precursors of the first 'Aliyah' were the Biluim, the fourteen Jewish students from Kharkov who landed at Jaffa in 1882. The second 'Aliyah' (1903-15) was predominantly Russian. The majority of the forty settlements that existed in Palestine before the World War I were created by Russian Jews.⁸⁷

Russian Jewry had responded overwhelmingly to Herzl's call. Of the 197 participants in the First Zionist Congress (1897), 66 were from Russia. Next year, the movement counted 373 local groups. At the fourth Congress (1900) Russian Zionists were represented by more than 200 delegates, and at the fifth (1901) they played a leading part in the formation of the 'Democratic Faction', which demanded that more attention be given to Jewish national education and culture.⁸⁸ The first all Russian Zionist conference met in 1902 at Minsk, with the participation of 500 delegates,

86. J.B. Schentman, 'The U.S.S.R., Zionism, and Israel', in Lionel Kochan, Ed., The Jews in Soviet Russia ed., (London, 1970), p.99.

87. Ibid., p.99.

88. Ibid.

representing some 75,000 shekel holders.⁸⁹ At the sixth Zionist congress (1903), the Russian delegation constituted the bulk of the 177 who opposed Herzl's proposal to appoint a commission to investigate the British Government's Uganda offer and walked out after the proposal had been accepted. By the time, Russian Zionism with its 1.572 local groups was a major force in the World Zionist Organisation.⁹⁰

Russian Zionists were an ideologically alert and diversified movement. After Herzl's death, the majority of the seventh Zionist Congress (1905) decisively rejected the Uganda project. The dissenting minority created a world wide Jewish Territorialist Organisation but this failed to capture the imagination of the Zionist masses in Russia. It found considerable and active support in labour circles. The Zionist Socialist Party (Z.S), founded in 1904-06, branded the Palestine solution as utopian, and devoted its main attention to problem of Jewish migration which, it believed, would automatically develop into a movement of colonization, and thereby solve the Jewish problem. Another socialist group with a Zionist background emerged in 1905-06. It opposed both the Palestinian and other territorialist

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid.

solution of the Jewish problem, and advocated Jewish national autonomy in Russia, based on an elected Jewish national assembly. They were called 'Sejmists' from the Polish term Sejm (Diet). Both groups later merged in a limited Socialist Party, known as the Fareinikte. By the spring of 1917, their combined membership was estimated at 13,000.⁹¹

Palestine - oriented Labour Zionism has been represented since 1900 by Poale Zion, whose Zionist concept was strictly materialistic, expressed in market terms. For a time they worked within the general framework of the Zionist organisation. Later, emphasis was increasingly put on proletarian class consciousness, which barred continued co-operation with the middle-class Zionist movement. Since 1903 an intermediate position had been occupied by the Tzeirei Zion groups. Their orientation was socialist, non Marxist, and with no stress on the class struggle. Tzeirei Zion constituted the back bone of the pioneer movement in Russia, and were predominantly represented in the second 'Aliyah'. From 1901 the religious wing in Zionism was represented by Mizrachi.

91. Oscar I. Janowsky, The Jews and Minority Rights, (New York, 1933), pp.218-19.

Prior to 1905 Revolution, the Russian Zionists consistently abstained from active participation in the country's general political life. The all Russian Zionist convention in Helsingfors, Finland held in November 1906 reversed this stand. A comprehensive and imaginative Helsingfors Programme" encompassed all aspects of Jewish interest in Russia. It offered, on the one hand, an organic synthesis between the struggle for Jewish civic and national rights in the country, and the upbuilding of the Jewish homeland in Palestine, on the other.⁹²

In Czarist Russia, Zionism was an illegal movement and like all other political parties was largely handicapped in its expansion. But the Soviets confronted a strong well-organised Zionist movement. With some 1200 local groups and a membership of 300,000,⁹³ it enjoyed virtual hegemony in Russia's Jewish community.

The Zionist cause could expect little understanding, let alone sympathy, from Russia's new rulers. As early as 1903, Lenin wrote in the party's central organ, Iskra (The Spark), that the very idea of a Jewish nationality was

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid., p.220.

"manifestly reactionary" and 'in conflict with the interests of the Jewish proletariat'. Ten years later, the verdict was reasserted by Stalin in the pamphlet **Marxism and the National Question**.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, in its early stages, the new regime did not noticeably affect Zionist activities. A "Palestine Week" proclaimed in the spring of 1918, was successfully conducted in hundreds of Jewish communities. A concerted effort was made to mobilize private initiative and capital for the upbuilding of Palestine. Within a year of the overthrow of the Czarist regime, Zionist activities were in full swing throughout Russia. In the *London Zionist Review* of October 1918, Isaak A. Naiditch, a leading Zionist and Vice-Chairman of the Moscow Jewish Council, was able to relate that the Jewish Commissariat (Yevkom), established in January 1916 as a subdivision of the people's Commissariat for National Affairs, "which at first proclaimed the combating of Zionism... as one of its chief tasks, has up to now accomplished nothing of any consequence".⁹⁵

Yevkom's early absence of a noticeably anti-Zionist record was primarily the result of its personal composition.

94. This has already been discussed under the sub-heading, The Jewish Nationality Question of this chapter.

95. Schechtman, n.86, pp.101-102.

It was staffed in the main by men who had virtually no specifically Jewish national background and who had no motivation for militant anti-Zionist action. They saw their personal mission in winning the Jewish masses for the communist cause through appeals in Yiddish. The Yevkom had neither time nor incentive or particular inclination to indulge in a sustained anti-Zionist crusade.⁹⁶ However, since the Zionists suspected any non-communist political formation and also by way of precaution the leadership dropped the Helsingfors programme. A Zionist conference, attended by sixty delegates, met in Moscow on 5-8 May 1918, and hailed the Balfour Declaration as the first step to international recognition of a Jewish Palestine, but passed a resolution calling for strict neutrality in Russia's internal political affairs.⁹⁷

The year 1918 passed in relative tranquillity. But the Jewish sections of the Communist Party known as the Yevsektzia, established simultaneously with the Yevkom and composed of virulently anti-Zionist former militants of the Bund and the Fareinikte, turned communist, had by the summer

96. Ibid.

97. Ibid., p.102.

of 1918 begun to denounce "the counter -revolutionary essence' of Zionism".⁹⁸

In the second half of 1919, the Yevsektisia sternly condemned the government's failure to act vigorously and speedily against Zionism and Zionists. The conference of Yevsektisia and Yevkom groups in Moscow, held in June 1919 urged the dissolution of the 'counter - revolutionary... clerical and nationalistic Zionist organisation...', an instrument in the hands of entente imperialism in its war against proletarian revolution'.⁹⁹

As early as that, the central Soviet authorities showed no inclination to yield to Yevsektisia's prodding. The year 1919 was the most critical in the life of the new regime. Fully absorbed by the desperate struggle against the advancing anti-Soviet armies, it was not inclined to pay attention to such a relatively 'innocuous' movement as Zionism.¹⁰⁰

Yet alarmed by the Yevsektisia conference, the Central Committee of the Zionist Organisation, in July 1919,

98. Ibid.

99. Ibid., p.104.

100. Ibid.

submitted to the all Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets (Vtsik) a memorandum avoided any mention of the essence of Zionist ideology maintaining that Zionist activities were merely directed at transforming Jewish small merchants into farmers and artisans in Palestine. In reply to this request, the Vtsik on 21 July resolved that since no decree of the Vtsik or the Council of People's Commissar had declared the Zionist party as counter revolutionary, and since the cultural and educational activities of the Zionist organisation did not contradict the decisions of the communist party, the Presidium of the Vtsik instructed all Soviet organisations not to hamper the Zionist party in its activities.¹⁰¹

The Zionist Central Committee rather optimistically interpreted this resolution as an implicit legalization of Zionism in the Soviet Union. Actually, it was but an equivocal and relatively phrased expression of official tolerance; it remained valid as long as no other Soviet body declared Zionism and Zionists to be counter - revolutionary.

The Yevseksia was increasingly damaged by the apparent semi-tolerance of the Soviet authorities and urged total

101. The Zionist REview, London, July and November 1918.

proscription and liquidation of Zionism. In July 1920, its third conference declared that there was 'no longer any ground for a cautious attack on Zionism. It is necessary to put an end to the vacillation of the official attitude towards the general Zionist party and to all its cultural and economic organisations. It is essential that a total liquidation be carried out, not with standing the socialist phaseology of the Tzeirei Zion and Zionist socialist.¹⁰²

There was no uniformity in the Soviet Government's response to Yevsektzia's pressure, though throughout 1920 harassments took place in other Jewish centres, usually in the wake of Yevsektzia inspired newspaper articles and denunciations; Zionist students were frequently expelled from the universities as "ideologically alien elements". On the other hand, there were communities where Zionist activities continued un-hampered.¹⁰³

In the early stages of the New Economic Policy (N.E.P.) inaugurated by Lenin in 1921, the general relaxation of the regime's administrative pressure made life easier for the Zionist groups as well. For some eight months they enjoyed a

102. The American Jewish Year book, Vol.21, pp.280-1.

103. J.B. Schechtman, n.86, p.106.

measure of respite from extensive harassment. Yevsektzia angrily protested at the government's "leniency". Their daily *Emes* (The Truth) of 13 January 1922 called for 'a campaign to exterminate Zionism in the U.S.S.R. forever'.¹⁰⁴

Repressions were resumed by mid - 1922. The main target was the Tzeirei Zion party. Two illegal Tzeirei Zion conferences, called with consummate conspirational precautions, went undetected. But the third conference, in a Kiev synagogue on 30 April 1922, was raided by the Cheka on the fourth day of its deliberations. Fiftyone persons were arrested, and thirty - seven of them appeared on 26 August before the Soviet military court. The indictment read:

The Tzeirei Zion is a popular wing of the Zionist party, which, under the mask of democracy, seeks to corrupt the Jewish youth and to throw them into the arms of the counter - revolutionary bourgeoisie in the interests of Anglo - French capitalism. To restore the Palestine state, these representatives of the Jewish bourgeoisie rely on reactionary forces, ranging from Tiutiunik and Petliura to such rapacious imperialists as Poincare, Lloye George, and the Pope.

104. Ibid.

The court unanimously pronounced the defendants guilty and charged: Twelve were sentenced to two years' hard labour, and fifteen to one year. Ten were released, after thirteen months those sentenced to two years were permitted to leave the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁵

In certain cases, the convicted Zionists were offered the tantalizing alternative of deportation to Palestine in return for a full recantation. This included an admission that the goals of Zionism were indeed anti-Soviet and/ or counter revolutionary. Those who signed such a statement were permitted to apply for the conversion of their sentence into a deportation order; they could then obtain an exit passport, valid for travel to Palestine.¹⁰⁶

The rationale for this opening of a tiny loophole was apparently two fold: the Soviet authorities might have been eager to get rid of hundreds of Zionist devotees, and they also wanted to impress world Jewish opinion favourably by showing that Zionists were prosecuted not because of the immigrationary aspects of their programme, but only for their "counter-revolutionary" sympathies and activities

105. Guido G. Goldman, Zionism Under Soviet Rule 1917-28, (New York, 1960), pp.75-6.

106. J.B. Schechtman, n.86, p.108.

within the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁷ This later consideration also seems to have accounted for the government's benevolent gesture towards the Histadruth (General Labour Federation in Palestine), which was invited to participate in the International Agricultural Exhibition in Moscow in the summer of 1924.¹⁰⁸ The Palestine pavilion attracted tens of thousands of enthusiastic Jewish visitors from all parts of the Soviet Union. Special excursions came from four large cities. Emboldened by this impressive demonstration, Zionists Youths in Odessa marched in formation in the streets singing the 'Hatiq Va. They were dispersed by the mounted police and 32 of them were arrested. They declared a five - day hunger strike as a protect against their treatment by the prison authorities.¹⁰⁹

On 25 August 1925 two Zionist leaders, Professor David Shor and Itzhak Rabinovich, submitted to Peter Smidovich, acting head of the Vtsik, a memorandum outlining Zionist aims and activities and asking for the release of all Zionist prisonrs, cessation of further arrests, and

107. Ibid., p.108.

108. Judd L. Teller, The Kremlin, the Jews, and the Middle East (New York, 1957), p.45.

109. Ibid., pp.50-1.

authorization of emigration to Palestine. A special session of the Vtsik discussed the request at considerable length, but inconclusively. The Zionists were advised to submit a project for a legalized emmigratory society. This was done. But the Yevsektzia immediately intervened and urged the Politburo of the Communist Party to reject any concession to the Zionists. A few days later Smidovich meaningfully told Rabinovich: "your own people are advancing all kinds of hindrances". The attempt to establish agreement with the regime petered out.¹¹⁰

The very fact that the highest echelons of the Soviet regime were prepared to negotiate with the Zionists at that time, the repeated assertions that the Soviet Government was actually "not against Zionism" and that all the harassment of the Zionists was the work of the Yevsektzia only, may appear puzzling. A partial answer to this puzzle may be that the Soviet Union saw no real 'danger' in the existence of the Zionist movement. It did not belong to the mainstream of Russia's political struggle, was in no way a challenge to their power. Yielding to the Yevsektzia's pressure the

110. J.B. Schechtman, n.86, p.108.

regime was willing to permit its Jewish communist section to denounce Zionism. But during the first decade of communist rule the Soviet Government was not prepared to make Yevsekasia's words and deeds the Governments official policy.

The rationale for this restraint towards Zionism was governments' vague apprehension. The clearly enunciated anti-Zionist policy unfavorably affects Soviet Russia's image in the Jewish communities of the Western world. Contrary to the belief, Soviet Russia was at that time very sensitive to world public opinion and was loath to experience only adverse Jewish reaction to the clear - cut official persecution of Zionism. "It was in this spirit that communist leaders did not refuse to discuss some *modus vivendi* with the non-legalised but also outlawed Zionists'.¹¹¹ Negotiation to this effect proceeded intermittently and inconclusively for more than half a year. They ended abruptly on 16 March 1926, when more than 100 Zionists, including the chief negotiator, Robinovich, were arrested and subsequently sentence to three year's exile in Kazakhastan.¹¹²

111. Ibid., p.110.

112. Goldman, n.105, p.87.

In the later part of the 1920s, Yevsektasia's position in the Soviet regime general structure started to deteriorate. The total liquidation of all Jewish national institutions (Kehitoth, Tarbut, O.R.T., O.S.E., etc., the actual disappearance of the Bund, Fareinikte and the Poale Zion, as well as the increasingly efficacious persecution of all forms of Zionist activities, throughout the U.S.S.R. for which the Yevsektasia claimed full credit, undermined its usefulness to the regime. By the end of the decade, the authorities apparently came to the conclusion that the Yevsektasia had outlived its usefulness: "The Moor has done his duty - the Moor can go". Neither in Yevsektasia nor the Yevkom which was dissolved early in 1924, together with the People's Commissariat for nationality affairs, of which it was a subdivision, were ever devised as permanent institutions to handle Jewish affairs in the communist spirit. The Communist Party and the governmental machinery took over.¹¹³

However, hostility towards Zionism and persecution of Zionists continued. Zionist activities were effectively crippled. The last citadels of organised underground Zionism

113. J.B. Schechtman, n.86, pp.111-112.

- the Moscow Central Executive Committee for Tzeirei Zion and the Union of Zionist Youth were liquidated in September 1934.¹¹⁴ In the years 1936-9, the government mounted an intensive, large-scale campaign against 'Zionist imperialist oppression of the Palestinian Arabs'. The Zionists were denounced on the radio, in the communist press, and in the resolutions passed at factory meetings Zionism officially pronounced dead and buried, still occupied a prominent place in the regime's propaganda effort.¹¹⁵

By the end of the thirties the also visible vestiges of organised Zionism had been ruthlessly and efficaciously eradicated in the U.S.S.R. The regime considered 'the Zionist Chapter' fully and irretrievably closed.

It was dramatically reopened in the early stages of the World War II. In September 1939 the Soviet Union annexed Poland's eastern and South - Eastern provinces with a Jewish population of about 1,200,000 - 1,250,000 (Some 300,000 Jews came later as refugees from the German occupied areas). In

114. Teller, n.108, p.55.

115. In volume 51 of the first edition of the large Soviet Encyclopaedia, 1944, Zionism was summarily dismissed as 'moribund': the final ideological rout of Zionism came with the Victory of the Great Soviet Revolution of October 1917".

June 1940 the Rumanian provinces of Bessarbia and Northern Bukovina were incorporated in the U.S.S.R. According to the Rumanian census of 1930, these had the Jewish population of 277,949. The almost simultaneous annexation of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania added a further 265,000 Jews. Within nine months, the Jewish community of the Soviet Union increase by some two million.¹¹⁶

Zionists constituted a high percentage of this influx. Polish Jewry, was the 'backbone' of the World Zionist Organisation. The Soviet Union had once again with a two-million-strong, predominantly Zionist, 'new' Jewish minority.

Soviet Union and the Palestine Question:

To the average Russian Orthodox Christian prior to the Russian Revolution of 1917, the possession of Constantinople (Istanbul), the cradle of Russian orthodoxy was merely a stepping-stone to the Holy Land of Palestine. Before World War I when the Russian spoke of Muslims, they meant the non-Arab Muslims World, especially the Turks and Tatars. It was

116. Schechtman, n.86, p.112.

the Bolshevik regime that made Russians cognizant of the Arab World'.¹¹⁷

The Bolshevik regime that became victorious in World I was aware of its unpopularity in Europe. One of the early steps taken by this Bolshevik regime was its "Appeal to the Muslims of Russia and the East" (December 5, 1917), urging them to join forces with the Soviet revolution. This appeal, signed by Lenin and Stalin, repudiated in no uncertain terms the secret agreements entered into by the Tsarist regime in 1915-16:

We declare that the secret treaties of the dethroned Tsar regarding the seizure of Constantinople, which was confirmed by the disposed Kerensky, now are null and void. The Russian Republic and its governments the Council of People's Commissars, are against the seizure of foreign territories. Constantinople must remain in the hands of the Muslims.¹¹⁸

Among the Muslims of the East, to whom the Bolsheviks, addressed this appeal were not only the Turks, Persians,

117. Ivar Spector, 'The Soviet Union and the Palestine Conflict' in Ibrahim Abu Lughod, The Transformation of Palestine, (ed.), (Evanston, 1970), p.413.

118. Ivar Spector, The Soviet Union and the Muslim World (1917-1958), (Seattle, 1959), pp.33-35.

Tatars and Kirghz but also the Arabs, the "victims of rapacious European plunderers".

One reason which must have motivated the Bolsheviks to include the Arabs, especially those of Palestine in their purview at this time was the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, issued just a few days prior to the Bolshevik seizure of power on November 7. The Balfour Declaration albeit un-intentionally served to divert a large part of the articulate Jewish population of Soviet Russia from communism to Zionism. The Jewish Bund, the Jewish counterpart of the Mensheviks (the right wing of the Russian Social Democrats), soon discovered that it constituted a minority in a sea of Zionists. The Bund had joined its Soviet comrades in a bitter and sustained anti-Zionist movement. This campaign was accentuated by the fact that Great Britain was the chief prompter of Allied intervention in Russia in the period 1918-20.¹¹⁹

To the Bolsheviks, therefore Zionism became synonymous with treason. When the Jewish Bund, together with other moderate socialists, fell into disgrace and was disbanded,

119. "Pis'mo Kamerikanskin rabochim" (A letter to American workers) (Pravda, August 22, 1918) in which Lenin associated England at one and the same time with seizing Palestine and beginning to seize Russia (Lenin, Sochineniia [works], vii). As cited in Ivor Spector, n.115, p.415.

the small group of Jewish Communists remained the focal point of opposition to Zionism.

With Zionism in disrepute in Soviet Russia, no Zionist was permitted to leave Soviet occupied territory, especially for Palestine. However toward the end of 1919, under the Denkin regime in Southern Russia, hundreds of Russian Zionists, in the guise of Palestinian refugees, did leave Russia, via Odessa, for Palestine. The first charter ship, which sailed for Palestine at the end of 1919 carrying several hundred Zionists, was the Russian.¹²⁰ When the Soviet government learned about this emigration permitted the departure of limited numbers of Zionists whose ranks were infiltrated with communists posing as Zionists. They formed the nucleus of the Party of Palestine, founded in 1919 and admitted to the Comintern in 1924.

The Inter War Period: Palestine became a close British Mandate on July 24, 1922 under the League of Nations pending such time as the country was ready for complete independence. The terms of the Mandate included the pledge

120. Ivar Spector, n.117, p.416.

of the Balfour Declaration? obligating Great Britain to create a Jewish national home in Palestine.¹²¹ The Soviet regime attacked the Mandate system as a mask for the seizure of Turkish and German possessions by the Entente powers.¹²² It refused to recognize the Palestine Mandate from its inception until its termination on May 15, 1948. The Soviet Union alleged that the Mandate system was one reason for its refusal to participate in the League of Nations. In 1934, when the U.S.S.R. did join the League, it specifically restated its negative position on the Mandate system.¹²³ The bankruptcy of British policy in Palestine", according to Soviet interpretation, was revealed by a succession of Arab uprisings in 1920, 1921, 1929, 1933 and 1936-39. From the Soviet standpoint, England established in Palestine "an imperialist regime, a military police dictatorship, and transformed the country actually into a British colony".¹²⁴

121. Mandate System has been discussed elaborately in earlier chapter.

122. Izvestia, June 22, 1923 as cited in Ivor Spector, n.117, p.416.

123. Izvestia, September 20, 1934. As cited in Ivor Spector, n.117, p.416.

124. Diplomatičeskii Slovar [Diplomatic dictionary] (Moscow, 1950), 11, 98-99, as cited in Ivor Spector, n.115, p.406.

The Soviet government emerged from the civil war (1918-20) with an intervention complex. to prevent a recurrence of this threat to its survival. It delegated to the newly created Third International (Comintern) in 1919 the conduct of an offensive or counter attack, against the colonial possessions or spheres of influence of England and France, with special emphasis on those in the Middle East adjacent to Soviet Russia. The first Soviet "Appeal to the Muslims of Russia and the East" was issued by the Bolshevik government in 1917. Fearing reprisals from the colonial powers, however, it caused the Second Appeal to be issued by the Comintern. On July 3, 1920, the Second Congress of the Third International invited the "enslaved peoples of the Middle East" to meet in Baku, the oil centre of the Caspian Sea. This same Congress passed a resolution condemning Zionist activities in Palestine.¹²⁵

The Baku assembly demonstrated that the Arabs were by no means the focus of Soviet concern. In 1920 of the 1,891 delegates who attended, only three were Arabs. There were as yet no independent Arab states in the Middle East. The Arabs

125. Minutes of the Second World Congress of the Communist International (Hamburg, 1921), pp.198, 204.

received occasional cursory mention in Soviet publications as the victims of British and French imperialism. However, for Moscow, Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan around the Soviet borders -- all confronted by English or Anglo-French territorial encroachment that constituted "The East" which awaited Soviet liberation. It were these three Muslim states, with some support from the West which stemmed the tide of Soviet expansion into the Arab world and forced the Soviet government to settle for non-aggression pacts with them early in 1921.¹²⁶

For several years thereafter the Soviet foreign policy was diverted from the Muslim world of the Near East to other areas. The Soviet government sought to normalize its relations with its European neighbours and to spread revolution in the Far East, especially in China. After Soviets were expelled from China in 1927 by the Kuomintang under Chiang Kai Shek, the U.S.S.R. turned once again to the Arab world. Taking advantage of existing unrest among the Arab peoples against the English and French mandatory powers and of Arab resentment against Zionist immigration into Palestine, it played at least indirectly, a role in

126. Ivor Spector, n.117, p.417.

fomenting and augmenting the disturbances in 1929 which spread rapidly throughout Palestine and to other Arab lands.¹²⁷

The Stalin regime, in 1929, was engrossed in the First Five Year Plan. Soviet leaders had little interest in events abroad including what was brewing in Palestine. The outbreak of riots in Jerusalem in August and their impact through out the Arab world reawakened Soviet interest in the progressive revolutionary movement' taking place in the Middle East.¹²⁸

At the Sixth Congress of the Comintern (July 19-September 1, 1928) a certain Haider, a Palestinian delegate criticised the Third International for its neglect of the Arab question. The Arab World, he insisted, was of great significance to the Comintern because of the confrontation in this small area of a large number of important problems and question, with different types of imperialist policy and all forms of colonial bondage.¹²⁹ When the riots occurred

127. A. Shami, The Palestine insurrection and the Arab East in Revolutionary East, no.8, 1930, pp.25-52.

128. Ivar Spector, n.117, p.418.

129. Stenographic account of the VI Comintern Congress, IV, pp.144-47. As cited in Ivar Spector, n.117, p.418.

in Palestine, the Comintern attributed them to the "dismemberment of Arabistan into numerous small countries", "disfranchisement of the basic mass of the population" (the Arabs), "violent Zionist colonization", and the growing pressure of British and French imperialism" in the Arab countries.¹³⁰ In this struggle, the Comintern accused the "Zionist bourgeois colonizers and their lackeys" of playing the role of direct agents of British imperialism, in contrast to the fallahin (peasants) and beduin (nomads) who provided the main driving force of the revolutionary movement.

The Communist Party of Palestine, comprised predominantly of Jews, was caught by surprise by the 1929 revolt. It was severely criticized by the Comintern for misunderstanding the revolutionary character of the Arab uprising as a "general national anti-imperialist peasant revolt," for its failure to make of the Palestinian Communist Party a Jewish-Arab movement, and for its lethargy

130. "The Resolution of the Political Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Communist International on 'The Insurgent Movement in Arabistan', October 16, 1929, in Xenia Jaukoff Fudin and Robert M. Slusser, Soviet Foreign Policy, 1928-1934: Documents and Materials (University Park, Pa, 1966), 1, 210-19, Document 33.

in neglecting to support the movement. Its number one task for the future, as outlined by the Comintern, was the "Arabization of the party from top to bottom". This included the creation of Arab or Joint Arab-Jewish trade-union organisation, the drafting of an agrarian program reflecting the demands of the fellahin and beduin and the exposure of Zionism and Majlis Islam as agents of imperialist reaction. Majlis Islam was an organisation of Arab nobility and clergy.¹³¹

The record of Soviet participation in the Palestinian revolutionary movement of 1929 and their plans for the future of Palestine and the Arab lands are to be found in the secret documents on the Programmes of the Communist Party for the Arab Countries, published in 1928.¹³² These were followed by another secret programme on "The Tasks of the Communist Party of Palestine in the Countryside, published in 1931 in Arabic and Hebrew.¹³³ This anti-Zionist document, intended for the Arabs, is still of major significance. Although it was written in a different time and against a different background, it represents, almost in

131. Ivor Spector, n.117, pp.418-419.

132. Ibid., p.419.

133. Ibid.

toto, the arguments used today in the Soviet press.¹³⁴ These and other documents pertaining to the Middle East and Palestine, were published in 1934 by the Marx-Engels Lenin Institute of the Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) under the title Documents of the Programms of the Communist Parties of the East. Except for a brief summation of one and on-half pages, this publication remained largely unknown in the West until 1956, when an English translation became available.¹³⁵

These documents provided a guide for the Communist Parties of the Middle East as to how, with the aid of the Soviet Union, they could spread communism and Soviet influence in Palestine and other Arab lands. This purpose was to be translated into action in Three stages: (i) The colonizing power must be exposed by means of an intensive national liberation movement, a campaign against colonialism which in their opinion, would create a United Front of all classes except the direct agents of imperialism.

(2) Once national independence had been achieved, the local communists conduct a campaign among the workers and

134. Ibid.

135. Ibid.

peasant masses to the effect that political sovereignty was not enough, that complete liberation involved a social, as well as a political revolution, that the liberated state, therefore, must pass to the control of the workers and peasants.

(3) The final stage was the seizure of power by the Communist Party.

This guide became and has remained the basis of Soviet Policy in the Middle East.

However, during the decade of the thirties, there was no significant move in Palestine and the Near East-Soviet activity, for the most part was restricted according to the above written blueprint for communism. Instructions and guidance were given to local Communist groups which were weak and inarticulate and which, in most instances, had been driven underground. The main reason for the comparative lull in Soviet-Arab relations was the rise of Fascism and Nazism in Europe and their impact on the Near and Middle East. The Arab rebellion of 1936-39, unlike that of 1929, invited little Soviet attention. This was due to tension abroad and the Stalin purges at home, which removed from the scene or

frightened into silence the remaining Soviet experts on the Middle East.¹³⁶

During these years, the anti-semitism of the Hitler regime evoked a sympathetic response among same nationalists, especially in Palestine. English officials in Palestine were inclined to tolerate the Nazis because they were anti-communist. At though, as a result, the Soviet government may well have become disillusioned with the Arabs in the late thirties, it was in no position to assume an aggressive role in the Near East until the end of World War II.¹³⁷

In June 1941 Hitler's armies invaded Soviet territory. In the face of new realities with its persistent anti-zionist policy on the home front, the Soviet Government made a sustained effort to enlist the sympathy and support of world Jewry for its war effort by an appeal to Jewish solidarity.

On 24 August 1941 the Jews the world over heard for the first time over the Radio a voice from Moscow, addressing

136. Walter Z. Laquer, The Soviet Union and the Middle East (New York, 1959), pp.115-18.

137. Ivor Spector, n.115, p.420.

them as 'Brider Y:den' (Brother Jews). In this broadcast the pact Parets Markish said that all Jews were now one people and one army and that no longer the man would divide them.¹³⁸

In April 1942 came the announcement of the formation in Moscow of a Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. The Committee's main purpose was to build up pro-Soviet public opinion among the Jews in the Western countries. The public opinion build-up was headed by Solomon M. Mikhoels, the renowned actor, and Itzik Feffer, Red Army colonel, communist poet laureate. Earlier in his verses he had classified Mufti of Jerusalem. Feffer's wartime poem, "I am a Jew", had the ring of Zionist anthems, evoking the Maccabees, heroes and symbols of the Jewish national revolt.¹³⁹

In 1943, Mikhoels and Feffer went with Stalins personal blessing to the United States and England, to plead for active Jewish support of the Soviet war effort. They were understandably eager to secure Zionist understanding and sympathy for their mission. In London, Michoels declared

138. Schechtman, n.86, p.114.

139. Ibid.

that Zionism is a "great idea" though it was inapplicable to Soviet Jewry with its deep roots in Russia. On his return to Moscow in December 1944, he sent greetings on Dr. Weizmann's seventieth birthday.¹⁴⁰ Interest in Palestine and Zionism was also shown by Ivan Maisky, the former Soviet envoy to London who visited Palestine in October 1943 and sent to Moscow a glowing account. In November 1944, Shachna Epstein, Secretary of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, wrote in the Committee organ, Aynikayt, that "the Jewish people has a right to political independence in Palestine and that no sensible and freedom loving person can have any objection to the Jews there continuing to develop in freedom the home they had set up through hard, constructive work, on the basis of self government".¹⁴¹ The following April, the Palestine Communist Party, which during the bloody riots of 1929 and 1939 had observed the Kremlins directives and glorified the "national revolutionary nature of Mufti's policies, received new instructions and announced its readiness to co-operate with the Histadrut in combating the infamous British White Paper. At the World Trade Union

140. Benjamin West, Struggle of a generation: the Jews under Soviet Rule (Tel Aviv, 1959), pp.144-145.

141. Sechtman, n.84, p.114.

Conference (W.T.U.C.) in London in February 1945, the Soviet delegation endorsed a resolution stating that "the Jewish people must be enabled to continue the rebuilding of Palestine as their National Home". It was also noted with satisfaction that the Moscow paper Red Star, the organ of the Red Army, published an article highly critical of the Arab League on 13 July 1945. Two days later its content was broadcast by Radio Moscow in Arabic.¹⁴²

At the conclusion of World War II, the victorious U.S.S.R. confronted a number of military, political, and economic problems. These problem can be put in three major categories: domestic, regional and International. In the home front was the task of building the war-torn areas. No doubt, the gigantic task of postwar reconstruction was given top priority, since Moscow's claim to superpower status rested on the twin pillars of military and industrial strength.¹⁴³

In regions adjacent to the Soviet frontiers -- Eastern Europe, the Far East, and the Middle East - U.S.S.R. in

142. Ibid., n.84, pp.114-115.

143. Oles M. Smolansky, 'The Soviet Role in the emergence of Israel; in W. Roger Louis and Robert W. Stookey (ed.), The End of the Palestine Mandate (London, 1986), p.61.

order to counter "capitalist encirclement" and to protect the national security set out to consolidate and, in some instances, to expand the territorial gains made during the war. The three regions mentioned above have been ranked in accordance with their respective military, strategic and political importance to the U.S.S.R. The experiences of 1930s and especially of the war still fresh in their minds, the Kremlin regarded Eastern and Central Europe as absolutely indispensable to the national security of the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁴

The territorial acquisitions on the shores of the Pacific, too, represented an important strategic asset. Japan had capitulated, China was weak and this had prompted the U.S.S.R. into a position of strength in the Far East. Relatively Middle East was less significant to Stalin than were the other two regions. However, this cannot be disputed that parts of the area, such as northern Iran and north-eastern Turkey as well as the Turkish Straits were of considerable strategic importance to Moscow. At the minimum, they controlled access to Russia's "soft underbelly" - the Ukraine and Transcaucasian area and the predominantly Muslim territories of Central Asia.¹⁴⁵

144. Ibid.

145. Ibid.

The situation that Stalin came across in the post-war Middle East in at least two important respects. First, unlike the other regions the Middle East had long been a sphere of exclusively Western (mainly British) influence. For this reason with the exception of northern Iran, the Russian Army made no move into the territory of the U.S.S.R.'s southern neighbors. Secondly, according to the 1941 agreement with Great Britain, Soviet troops were obliged to leave northern Iran no later than six months after the end of World War II. In view of these considerations, the Kremlin was left with no choice but to pursue its interest in the Middle East by means of diplomatic negotiations with its war time allies. Soon it was explicit to Stalin that neither London nor Washington was prepared to countenance Soviet aggrandizement since the Middle East was viewed by them as vital to western military, political, and economic interests. Refusal to permit Russian expansion applied not only to Turkey and Iran but also to the former Italian Colonies that Moscow had sought to administer in the early post war period.¹⁴⁶

146. Bruce R. Kuniholm, The Origin of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece (Princeton, 1980), pp.269 and 351.

After 1945, when it became obvious that the West had no intention of offering any such recognition, Moscow embarked upon a course of political competition vis-a-vis its former Allies. The main concentration was on three major areas contiguous to the Soviet Union: Europe, the Far East, and the Middle East. Stalin's handling of the Palestine problem is an interesting example of such a process.

Attempts of Cooperation: Though at the Yalta Summit, the question of Palestine was not on the official agenda, it did come up in informal discussion. The most striking feature of these deliberations seems to have been a tacit agreement by the Allied heads of state "to hand over Palestine to the Jews and to continue Jewish immigration at least for the immediate future".¹⁴⁷ President Roosevelt subsequently reported being surprised by the fact that "Stalin had not appeared opposed to Zionism".¹⁴⁸ Kremlin's conciliatory posture was probably influenced by a desire to demonstrate to the Western Allies its flexibility at a juncture when it

147. Yaacov Ro'i, Soviet Decision Making in Practice: The USSR and Israel, (New Jersey, 1947-1954), p.16.

148. Oles, M., n.142, p.64.

was generally assumed that the question of the Palestine mandate would soon be submitted to the United Nations, whose establishment had been officially agreed upon at Yalta.¹⁴⁹

By being a prominent member in the United Nations and having veto power in the Security Council, the Soviet Union expected to play a prominent part in deciding the future status of Palestine. Since no vital Soviet interest were claimed to be at stake in Palestine, direct Russian involvement in the affairs of the former League of Nations mandate would have meant implicit Western recognition of the legitimacy of Moscow's role.¹⁵⁰

Stalin's calculations at Yalta went awry. Prime Minister Churchill, in late February 1945, announced his government's decision not to submit the political problem to the United Nations. It was clearly evident that this move was to preclude Soviet Union in the affairs of the Mandate. This decision on the part of Churchill, "deprived ... [Stalin's conciliatory] stand on Palestine, including the support of the Jewish cause there, of its *raison d'être*."¹⁵¹

149. Ibid.

150. Yaacov Roi, n.147, p.15-16.

151. Ibid., p.17.

The resolve of the Allied powers to keep Soviet Union away from the Palestinian question was well-taken by Kremlin. When, in late fall of 1945, Great Britain set up the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry to review the Jewish refugee problem in Europe as well as the situation in Palestine,¹⁵² Stalin adversely reacted to the Committee and its recommendations.¹⁵³ He was convinced that London and Washington had no intention to cooperate with Moscow. The U.S.S.R. was left with no choice but to develop its own approach to the political problem. The Kremlin endeavored to return the issue to the United Nations where they could be expected to play a prominent role. Whatever Stalin's original intentions may have been, it was obvious that thereafter, in Palestine and elsewhere, East-West relations would be marked not by cooperation but by confrontation.¹⁵⁴

U.S.S.R. was not lacking in power with respect to Palestine. Soviet trump card was the issue of immigration to Palestine which it played in 1946-47. Soviet Union was not in a position to control events in Palestine directly.

152. See J.C. Hurewitz, The Struggle for Palestine, (New York, 1950), Chap. 18.

153. Yaacov Ro'i, n.147, pp.23-27.

154. Oles, M., n.143, p.65.

However, it was in a position to deny emigration to the Jews from Eastern Europe to counter the Western objections to its participation in the resolution of the Palestine problem. Kremlin set out to facilitate their emigration to the Western Zones of Germany and Austria. It should be noted that earlier Soviet Union had taken a stance publicly that it was opposed to mass exodus of Jews of Eastern Europe as well as to Zionism.¹⁵⁵ The Soviet government did so in full awareness of the fact that most emigrants were determined to proceed to Palestine and to do what they could to ensure the establishment of a Jewish state.¹⁵⁶ As a result, the number of Jewish displaced persons (DPs) in West Germany and Austria swelled from "less than 100,000 in summer 1945 to approximately a quarter of a million early in 1947," making it impossible for the West to disregard "the Question of Palestine's political future".¹⁵⁷

Initiation of this policy, on the part of Kremlin, seemed to have been serving related objectives. First, Great Britain was opposed to the mass immigration of Jews to

155. Ibid.

156. Yaacov Ro'i, n.147, pp.25-33.

157. Ibid., p.33.

Palestine and President Truman was in favour of it. Moreover large scale influx of Jewish DPs in the Allied zones of occupation could have been expected, at a minimum, to exacerbate Anglo-American relations. Second, the influx of a large number of East European Jews into Palestine might well have resulted in a failure of Western efforts to resolve this ticklish problem independently of the larger international community. Either way, the chances of the Palestine issue being brought before the United Nations, Moscow's major political objective in 1946,47, did greatly improve. Stalin's gambit, followed by the Kremlin's support of the Jewish community's (Yishuv) political aspirations in Palestine did indeed lead to the desired results.¹⁵⁸ The Soviet moves eventually contributed to the collapse of Anglo-American attempts to settle the Palestine question outside the U.N. framework. Once that occurred Great Britain was forced in early 1947 to place the Palestine Question again on the United Nations agenda. It became virtually difficult to deny the U.S.S.R. active participation in the search for a resolution of the problem.¹⁵⁹

158. Oles M., n.142, pp.65-66.

159. Ibid., p.68.

Stalin had come to the conclusion that cooperation between the U.S.S.R. and its war time Allies was impossible. Kremlin began actively searching for means to weaken the Western hold on the Middle East. Palestine represented a 'weak link' in Great Britain's regional - imperial defence system'. It was vulnerable because of the existence in that country of two competing nationalisms - Jewish and Arab that worked not only to frustrate each other's ambitions but also to rid themselves of British tutelage. Therefore, in concentrating on Palestine, Moscow could have reasonably hoped to remove the British presence. This could have been the prelude for the withdrawal of imperialist presence from the whole of Middle East.¹⁶⁰ It is an irony that for the attainment of these particular objectives Stalin's policies more readily facilitated Soviet backing of Zionists rather than Arab nationalist aspirations in Palestine.

However, Kremlin, before it could commit itself openly to the Zionists, had to out maneuver Anglo-American moves to exclude Moscow from attempts to resolve the Palestine problem. Kremlin in 1946-47 did likewise by insisting that any change in "the status of dependent territories" should

160. Ibid.

be decided by the United Nations.¹⁶¹ Stalin's persistence paid off in February 1947 when the British Government expressed its inability to mediate the Arab-Jewish dispute referred and the Palestine problem to the UN.¹⁶² In the meantime Soviet ability to influence events in Palestine had considerably increased. The Jewish population had swollen on account of large-scale immigration of East European Jews. The situation in Palestine was deteriorating fast since the Jews and Arab Palestinian were locked in incessant conflagration and with the British. This offered a unique opportunity to U.S.S.R. to influence events by supporting Zionist aspirations for an independent Jewish state.

The Kremlin welcomed the submission of the Palestine Question to the U.N. Andrei Gromyko Deputy Foreign Minister declared on May 8, 1947, that the U.S.S.R. was prepared 'to take upon itself, together with the United Nations as a whole, the responsibility not only for the final decisions that may be taken by our organization on the Palestine problem, but also for the preparation of the decision.'¹⁶³

161. Yaacov Ro'i, p.147, p.46.

162. Hurewitz, n.151, p.273.

163. Izvestia, May 11. 1947. Text as quoted in Oles M., n.142, p.77.

CHAPTER-VI

THE UNITED NATIONS AND PARTITION RESOLUTION

The Problem before the General Assembly

The negotiations of the British government with the two communities Arabs and Jews had come to a dead lock and hostilities in Palestine had increased. The British government under these circumstances decided in February, 1947 to place the problem before the United Nations. Mr. Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary explaining the reason behind this decision, told the House of Commons on Feb. 18, 1947: that: .lh12

His Majesty's Government have of themselves no power, under the terms of the Mandate, to award the country either to the Arabs or to the Jews or even to partition it between them. It is in these circumstances that we have decided that we are unable to accept the schemes put forward either by the Arabs or the Jews or not to impose ourselves a solution of our own. We have, therefore, reached the conclusion that the only course now open to us is to submit the problem to the judgment of the United Nations.¹

On April 2, 1947 the British Government asked that the question of Palestine be placed on the agenda for the next

1. I. Larry Leonard, The United Nations and Palestine (New York, 1949), p.613.

regular session of the United Nations General Assembly. In addition, Britain asked for the convening of a special session to appoint and instruct a special committee to prepare the ground for the General Assembly's study of the future government of Palestine.²

In a meeting held on April 17, 1947 the Political Committee of the Arab League decided to oppose the creation of a committee of inquiry by the United Nations, and proposed the inclusion on the Agenda of the special session of an item calling for the termination of the mandate over Palestine and declaring it an independent country. Further, if a committee of inquiry were to be set up against Arab wishes, they agreed to work toward the inclusion in the Mandate over Palestine and recognition of that country's independence. The delegations of the Arab states were asked to follow these guidelines during the deliberation of the Palestine problem by the coming special session of the United Nations.

However before the special session got underway, the Arabs were confident that the other delegates would be aware

2. U.N. Document A/364. "UNSCDP Report to the general Assembly" Vol. II, Annex 1, p.1.

of their side of the story and the final decision would be in their favour. The Jewish Agency began to make detailed plans to win support for the Zionists arrived in Palestine for conferences on future policy. The discussions of three weeks, and the resolutions adopted have not been disclosed; but six U.S. members of the Jewish Agency and Dr. Nahum Goldman were appointed to organise the U.N. Campaign.³

The First special session of the General Assembly of opened at Lake Success on April 28, 1947 to consider the Palestine question. There were two proposals on the agenda, a British proposal that asked for "the constitution and instruction of a committee to investigate the Palestine question",⁴ and an Arab proposal submitted by Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia calling for the "termination of the Mandate over Palestine and the declaration of its independence."⁵ This Arab item of the agenda was in accordance with the decision taken by the Political Committee of the Arab League on April 17, 1947, as previously

3. Robert John Sami Hadawi, The Palestine Diary, Vol. II (Beirut, 1970), p.126.
4. UN Document A/364, Add 1 of September 9, 1947, "Report of UNSCOP", Vol. II, Annex I, p.1.
5. Ibid., Annex 2, pp.1-2.

mentioned. The Arab states based their suggestions on the ground that the problem before the General Assembly was not that more facts needed to be found, but that self determination should be applied as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. These principles, in the opinion of the Arab states, were inconsistent with the Palestine Mandate which was based on Power politics, rather than the right or wrong of the situation.⁶ When the vote was taken on the Arab proposal the General Assembly decided by a vote of 15 in favor, 24 against with 10 abstentions, not to recommend the inclusion of the Arab states proposal in the agenda.⁷ With the defeat of the Arab item of the agenda in

6. Frank H. Epp., Whose Land in Palestine? (Lond, 1969) p.175.

7. General Assembly, Official Records, First Special Session 1947, Vol.II, pp.12, 81.

Voted in favour: Afghanistan, Argentina, Byelorussian S.S.R., Cuba, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Ukrainian S.S.R., U.S.S.R., Yugoslavia.

Against: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Greece, Honduras, Liberia, the Netherlands, Newzealand, Norway, Panama, Peru, Phillipino Republic Sweden, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Abstentions: Bolivia, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic of El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guetemala, Haiti, Maxico, Poland.

Absent: Costa Rica Iceland, Luxembourg, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Siam.

the Assembly, another procedural question was taken up that consumed much time, i.e. the representation on of the Arabs and Jews of Palestine before the organisation. It was ultimately decided that the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the Arab Higher Committee could appear before the First Committee.⁸

After setting the procedural questions before it, the General Assembly took up the main question of the constitution and instruction of the special committee to prepare the Palestine question for consideration at the second regular session. Before the assembly, there were two principal resolutions. One, submitted by the U.S. delegation, suggesting an investigation committee composed of Canada, C Czechoslovakia, Iran, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden and uruguay. The other resolution was submitted by Argentina, calling for an investigation committee composed of sixteen states There would be China, France, U.S.S.R., United Kingdom, United States, one state chosen from among the Five Arab states, and five other states chosen by lot on a regional basis - one from Asia one from Africa, one from

8. General Assembly, Official Records, First Special Session, 1947, Vol.III, pp.365-66.

the Pacific and three from the American continent.⁹ The basic difference between the two resolutions was in the attitude toward the participation of the Big Five. While the Argentine resolution favored such participation, the American opposed it. Another point of difference was in the inclusion of one member of the Arab states on the special committee. The author of the Argentine proposal, considered Arab participation desirable because it would "place the problem in the hands of all those who have some interest in the problem."¹⁰ The Soviet Union Representative also supported the inclusion of one Arab representative on the committee. He saw no reason "for objecting to the inclusion in this committee of one of the Arab countries which, as we know seems particularly concerned with the Palestine problem. Mr. Gromyko also supported inclusion of representative of the permanent members of the security council in the U.N. Special Committee on Palestine.

9. General Assembly, Official Records, First Special Session, 1947, Vol.III, pp.365-66.

10. Jacob Robinson, Palestine and the United Nations (Washington, 1947), p.156.

He informed the First Committee that:

it is enough to ask ourselves the question in what circumstances will it be easier to reach agreement on the Palestine problem at the forth coming session of the General Assembly ? Will it be if the five great powers participate in the preparation of proposals and decisions, or if the Five great powers stand aside? It is obvious that there will be fewer difficulties in reaching agreement on the Palestine question at the next regular session of the General Assembly if the Five powers take part in the preparation of the relevant recommendations for the General Assembly".¹²

The proposal of Soviet Union was supported by Poland and was opposed by U.K. At the close of the debate on the two resolutions, the First Committee at its fifty seventh meeting adopted the amended American Resolution. This excluded the permanent members of the security council and the membership of the committee swelled to eleven.¹³ The General Assembly on May 15, 1947, appointed the following

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., Vol. III, pp.345-46.

states to the United Nations special committee on Palestine (UNSCOP): Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay and Yugoslavia.¹⁴ After solving the problem of the composition of the special committee, the first committee turned its attention to the formulation of its terms of reference.

Having failed to get their proposal Agenda item included on the agenda of the special Session and failing in the prevention of the creation of the committee of inquiry the Arabs concentrated their efforts on the terms of reference of the UNSCOP. The Arabs strove to prevent UNSCOP from examining the Jewish displaced persons situation in Europe and Jewish immigration into Palestine, because these problems, the Arabs contended, had no connection with the Palestine problem. The Egyptian delegate, Mohmoud Hassan Pasha told the committee:

I do not see why we should complicate the question of Palestine by stepping on the rights of the original inhabitants of that country and allowing an invasion by an alien racial group. It is my belief.... that the question of Palestine is independent of the question of the displaced persons.¹⁵

14. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 176-77.

15. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 186.

On the question of independence of Palestine, Mr. Hassan informed the Committee that:

It is most unjust and clearly opposed to the Charter of the United Nations, to single out Palestine from among all of the countries of the world and make its independence conditional upon the Jews becoming a majority against the wishes of the present majority of Palestinians.¹⁶

The Syrian delegation headed Mr. Faris EL khouri told the committee, "The question of Palestine is altogether independent and separate from the question of persecuted persons in Europe. The Arabs of Palestine are not responsible in any way for the persecution of the Jews in Europe."¹⁷ Mr. Charles Malik representing the Lebanese delegation shared the same feelings as those of Egypt and Syria. Mr. Malik observed:

It is very unfortunate that we constantly link these two problems together, either by implication or by direct mention, namely, the problem of Palestine on the one hand and the problem of the refugees and displaced persons on the other. I think if we continue to do that, we are giving further indications to our committee beyond our terms of reference from the General Assembly.¹⁸

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., pp.184-85.

18. Ibid., p.285.

There views were opposed by the Jewish agency. The Jewish agency considered the problem of Jewish immigration to be the heart of the problem and as such it must be considered by the committee. Mr. M. Shertok informed members of the First Committee that he favored the United States Government proposed for including the displaced persons situation on the agenda. According to Mr. Shertok the relevant paragraph should read, "That the committee shall bear in mind the principle that independence for the population of Palestine should be the ultimate purpose of any plan for the future of that country and shall study various other issues connected with the problem of Palestine."¹⁹

After the conclusion of the general debate before the first committee on the terms of reference of UNSCOP, voting began on the specific wording of these terms as included in the United States resolution. The other resolution submitted before the Committee by Argentina was withdrawn.²⁰

The Vote taken on the paragraph that would permit the UNSCOP to visit refugee camps in Europe was adopted by a

19. Ibid., p.180.

20. Ibid., p.321.

vote of 36 in favor, 8 against and 4 objections. The proposal of the Arab states that the question of Palestine was one in itself, did not receive the necessary vote for its passage. When the next paragraph, which read: "The special committee shall prepare a report to the general Assembly and shall submit such proposals as it may consider appropriate for the solution of Palestine" was next brought to vote, the delegations from India and the Soviet Union submitted amendments that would add the words "...including a proposal on the question of establishing without delay the independent democratic state of Palestine."²¹ These amendments were defeated. Supporting the amended draft resolution were the Arab states, the Soviet block, Afghanistan, India and Turkey while 26 voted against it, 12 abstained.²²

The Arab states reacting to the outcome of the vote in the General Assembly declared that they would vote in the General Assembly against the terms of reference of UNSCOP as adopted in the first committee. In a brief statement before the committee, El Khouiri explained why the Syrian delegation intended to vote against the terms of reference as adopted in the committee:

21. Ibid., p.310.

22. Ibid., pp.312-13.

The reason is that a definite proposal for the independence of Palestine was detected by a great majority, and that another proposal to the effect that the solution should be based on the preamble of the charter of the United Nations, and the Covenant of the League of Nations was also over looked.²³

In a nut shell, the first committee had not included the question of Palestine's independence in the instructions to UNSCOP and that group had complete freedom to go anywhere to study entire Palestine problem, specifically Zionist point of view.

The General Assembly received the recommendations of the First Committee and before the vote on the recommendations was taken the delegate from Egypt expressed his opinion that he would vote against the committees report. He said, " The decisions reached by the First Committee are not in line with the legal and political remedies believed necessary by us to a just and lasting solution of the Palestine problem".²⁴ The other Arab representatives supported Mr. Mohmoud Hassan Pasha of Egypt.

23. Ibid., p.360.

24. Ibid., Vol.I, p.145.

When the delegates finished explaining the Arab position. the recommendations of the First Committee were put to a vote. It was adopted by a vote of 45 for, 7 against, 1 abstention and 2 absent.²⁵

The resolution adopted by the General Assembly provided that, (1) a committee of Inquiry composed of eleven states was to be established; (2) the committee was given the power to investigate all issues connected with the Palestine problem and submit its recommendations to the General Assembly no later than Sept 1947; and (3) the committee was given Freedom to examine the problem of displaced persons in Europe and any other issues connected with the Palestine problem.²⁶

25. Ibid, p.176.

Voted in favour: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Byelorussian S.S.R., Canada, Chile, China, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El-Salvador, Ethiopic, France, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, India, Iran, Liberia, Luxemburg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Sweden, Ukrainian S.S.R., U.S.S.R., Union of South Africa, U.K., U.S.A., Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia.

Against: Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey.

Abstention: Siam.

Absent: Haiti, Philippine Republic.

26. Ibid., pp.175-76 Resolution 106 (S-I) May 15, 1947.

Another resolution was put forward before closing of the session of General Assembly. It included an amendment proposed by the representative from EL Salvador that added the phrase "the inhabitants of Palestine". This resolution, which asked all the concerned parties in the region:

to refrain, pending action by the General Assembly on the report of the Special Committee on Palestine from the threat or the use of force or any other action which might create an atmosphere prejudicial to an early settlement of the question of Palestine."²⁷

This was passed with no opposition, though the Arab states abstained. Following the vote on the resolution, governments of the eleven states which comprised the UNSCOP communicated the appointment of their representatives. The members of the UNSOP included the representative of Guatemala, Garcia Granados, who was considered to have a pro Zionist sympathy. In this regard he had the support of the representative of Uruguay.

The Arabs had virtually lost every point in the first phase of the battle. The Arab frame of mind was reflected

27. Ibid., pp.173-740.

in the newspapers throughout the Arab states. The Jordanian daily, Felestin, wrote in its editorial: "Our defeat at the U.N.O. was complete but defeat here is a figure of speech; what was actually defeated was right and justice, while the Atlantic Charter failed and the consciences of Europe and America were bankrupted."²⁸

Most of the Arabs press reflected the view that the defeat of the Arab proposals was a result of an Anglo-American conspiracy in which the United States took active part. An editorial in Al- Difa said: " The Arabs fought very hard to explain to all world government the tragedy of Palestine, but Arab efforts were in vain in the face of the well contrived Anglo-Zionist (or rather Anglo American) conspiracy, because its foundation was established by the hated Balfour Declaration and the Mandate."²⁹ Ash-Sha'b commented that the greatest influence on the formation of the fact-finding committee was that of the British and

28. Felestin (Jordan), May 19, 1947. As cited by Z. Hamadan, A Study of the Arab Israeli Conflict in the United Nations During the period between 1947 Untill 1957 (Ph.D. Dissertation, Union Graduate School, 1976), p.39.

29. Al-Difia (Jordan), May 16, 1947. As cited by Z. Hamadan no.28, p.51.

Americans. Those same countries restricted the terms of reference.³⁰

The Arab states had gone to the United Nations with the idea that the concepts and morals that were ingrained in the Charter of the United Nations would at least guarantee them a fair opportunity to persuade other nations that their cause was just. The Arab states attempted to dissuade the General Assembly of the necessity to have another fact finding commission and tried to get the point across that the real issue was whether or not the Arab inhabitants were to be deprived of their homeland in Palestine through increased Jewish immigration. Al-Difa said that the Arab states:

were not surprised of Britain's attitude in preparing its own favorable atmosphere for the special session and then staying in a corner watching her plot hatch, nor the American attitude which had embraced the Zionist cause over since it ... saw an easy way for American power to penetrate the Arab world ...but what

30. Ash-Shab, As cited by Z. Hamdan no.28, p.51.

did cause astonishment was the statement by Gromyko ... setting the principles of his country and the Nations at a cheap price ... to disturb the atmosphere of the Middle East, since disturbance serves the Russian interests.³¹ And later, Gromyko... appeared to be exactly like the representatives of the imperialist states.³²

The Arabs also emphasized that the fact of Jews being displaced persons in Europe was regrettable, but certainly was not relevant to a solution of the Palestine problem. They further drove the point home that if a fact finding body were appointed investigation of Jewish problems in any place other than Palestine was not appropriate. And certainly not the least important was the Arab attempt to have the General Assembly place their proposal that the British mandate be immediately ended on the agenda.

The defeat on all counts at this first placement of the Arab problem before the United Nations gave the Arabs cause to feel that the United Nations was not a fair tribunal where principles above predominated, but was instead an organization dominated by the Major powers.³³

31. Al-Difa, May 16, 1947. As cited by Z. Hamadan, no.28, pp.51-52.

32. Ibid., May 20, 1947.

33. Arab News Bulletin, 11.6 (June 21, 1947), p.4. As cited by Z. Hamadan, n.28, p.53.

While the Arabs had tried parliamentary procedures which could have gained them their legitimate support, they suffered from the lack of skilled diplomats serving on the delegation from the Arab states, and also from naivete. On the other hand, the Zionists had obviously mobilized sufficient support in the big countries which would subsequently influence the smaller countries, to win the extremely important first round. Had the Arabs succeeded in having the UNSCOP consider the question of immediate independence of Palestine, then the Arab majority would be able to make it an Arab state. Had the Arabs succeeded in having the UNSCOP drop outside issues and had them make their recommendations based on the facts relevant to Palestine alone, the result may not have ended as it did.

However, the result of the first special session of the United Nations Organisations over held had been a complete victory for the Zionists. Every pointer that they had held out before the session had been followed. The terms of reference of UNSCOP did not include the issue of independence of Palestine; Britain and Arab States were not included in the composition of UNSCOP. The U.S.S.R. and its allies of the East European countries had underwritten the idea of partition and setting up a Jewish state; the posture of the U.S. delegation had met with their approval.

The very composition of UNSCOP was most favourable to the Zionists. Of the twelve States represented, the governments of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia would follow Moscows lead; those of Guatemala, Peru and Uruguay were already sympathetic to Zionist state scheme; and Zionism was not without influence in the Netherlands and Sweden.

The United Nations Special Committee On Palestine

UNSCOP arrived in Jerusalem in mid June of 1947. Its first request was that the Government of Palestine and the Jewish Agency appoint liaison officers. Mr. D.C. MacGillivray was assigned to represent the while Aubrey S, Eban and David Horowitz served as liaison officers for the Jewish Agency.³⁴ Concurrent with its arrival in Palestine, the UNSCOP body received a cable from the secretary General of the U.N. advising them of the decision of the Arab Higher Committee to abstain from collaboration with UNSCOP on the grounds that the committee from the U.N. was predisposed toward favoring a Zionist solution. The Higher Committee declared further that the natural rights of the Palestinian people were selfevident and based on the

34. UN Document A/364, UNSCOP Report, 1947, Vol.II, p.5.

principles of the United Nations Charter ... as such they need not be subject to another investigation. Furthermore, the Arabs were angry that the UNSCOP had rejected to demands of other Arab states that the problems of Palestine and the Jewish refugees be separated. The Higher Committee even organised a general strike for the day of the arrival of UNSCOP in Palestine to show the profound feelings. The Arab League and governments of the Arab states tried to persuade the Higher Committee to change its contrary attitude, for the intractable position that the higher Committee was developing would be "poor propaganda" and would hurt the overall Arab cause.³⁵

The Arab Higher Committee however refused to appear before UNSCOP, the Chairman of the UNSCOP appealed for full cooperation in a broadcast on June 16, 1947:

I cannot put it too strongly that this committee has come to Palestine with an open mind. Our membership represents eleven different countries elected by the General Assembly, no one of which has any concern with the Palestine Question, but each of which shares the general concern for its equitable

35. Fred J. Khouri, The Arab Israeli Dilemma (Sydney, 1966), pp. 45-46.

solution. We are impartial on this problem and we intend to make an impartial report to the General Assembly . We come without bias. We have reached no conclusions in advance and we will reach none until we are in possession of the necessary information. Indeed, the work of this committee begins here.³⁶

Three weeks later, UNSCOP decided to follow up the appeal by its chairman with a letter asking the Arab Higher Committee to reconsider its decision of non-cooperation.³⁷ Jamal el-Husseini, Vice Chairman of the Arab Higher Committee on July 10, 1947, replied. He stated that the Arab Higher committee found no reason to change its previous decision.³⁸ In contrast to the Palestinian Arab position, the other Arab states wanted to cooperate with UNSCOP as did the Jewish Agency.

The UNSCOP interviewed the representatives of the Palestine Government in the hope of obtaining information that would be helpful in reaching some conclusions. In keeping with the a declared British position, no official recommendations for a solution were offered.³⁹

36. UNSCOP Report, 1947, Vol. II, p.5.

37. Ibid.,p.6.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid., Vol. IV, Annex B, pp.1-13.

After the representative of the Palestine Government there came the Jewish Agency. Its representatives gave their position to UNSCOP as follows:

- (a) That Palestine be established as a Jewish commonwealth integrated in the structure of the democratic world
- (b) That the gates of Palestine be opened to Jewish immigration.
- (c) That the Jewish Agency be vested with the control of immigration into Palestine and the necessary authority for the upbuilding of the country.⁴⁰

Many Jewish organization in Palestine and throughout the rest of the world submitted written or oral statements to the UNSCOP agreeing with the Jewish Agency for Palestine that the British mandate should be ended immediately and a Jewish state created. There were, however, difference of opinion between those who demanded that the whole of Palestine become a Jewish state, and those who are prepared to accept partition provided the territory assigned to the Jewish State was large enough to permit the settlement of a

40. Ibid., 1, p.40.

large number of new immigrants.⁴¹ There was also a third faction which advocated a binational state with equal political rights for the two communities regardless of their respective sizes. Dr. Magnes, a leader of this faction, warned that partition would simply continue Arab claims on the land awarded to the Jews and result in war. He contended that:

Upon the basis of experience of the past twenty five years ..., Arab-Jewish cooperation has never been made the chief objective of major policy, either by the mandatory government, by the Jewish Agency, or by those representing the Arabs. Arab-Jewish relationship is the main political problem which one has to face ... This is the Kernel of the problem.⁴²

UNSCOP could not hear the Arab point of view from the Arab Higher Committee, so it decided to invite the Arab States to a private meeting to express their views on the Palestine question. Before the committee arrived in Lebanon, a set of questions was forwarded to Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon,

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid., IV, Annex B, pp.195-96.

Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen for a written answer. Since Jordan was not a member of the United Nations, she did not send a representative to the proposed meeting but instead welcomed the committee to visit Jordan to hear her views on the problem.

UNSCOP met with the representatives of the Arab States in Lebanon on July 23, 1947.⁴³ It is worth noting that the Arabs had held a preliminary meeting and had decided to submit one joint answer to each question asked them by UNSCOP. One of the questions asked which solution to the Palestine problem would be favored by the Arab States. It provided three choices:

- (a) A binational state with a limited immigration
- (b) A Federal state, comprising two or more part states, each having the power to determine whether or not immigration would take place
- (c) Partition, involving establishment of a new state, or the establishment of a bridgehead.

The Arab States, as well as the Arab Higher Committee of Palestine rejected all these solutions because the establishment of a new state, or the establishment of a

43. Ibid., IV, p.42.

bridgehead, would be incompatible with their own rights.⁴⁴ The Arab states informed UNSCOP that the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine would endanger the other Arab states. Mr. Hamid Frangie of Lebanon summarized the Arab fears for the creation of such a state in Palestine by informing the committee that:

A Jewish state however small would constitute a danger for the Arab world both from the interior and the exterior. From the interior it would create friction, exert a certain economic pressure and would gradually infiltrate in order to create disorder. From the exterior a Jewish state would constitute a bridgehead against the Arab world.⁴⁵

In answering another question concerning the partition of Palestine by the United Nations, the Lebanese Foreign Minister, as the Arab spokesman, declared: " It was never the intention of the Charter to agree to a partition of the country I think this would be absolutely against all the principles of the Charter."⁴⁶

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., p.39.

46. Ibid., p.41.

On July 25, seven members of the UNSCOP visited Amman, to talk with king Abdullah and his Prime Minister about the Palestine problem. The king's views and those of the Jordanian Government were essentially the same as those presented by the other Arab states in Lebanon.⁴⁷.

The view of the Arab States that were given to UNSCOP were summarized as follows

(a) Palestine should be a unitary state, with a democratic constitution and an elected assembly.

(b) That the constitution should provide inter alia guarantees for :

(i) the sanctity of the holy places and, subject to suitable safeguards, freedom of religious practice in accordance with the status ; (ii) full civil rights for all Palestine citizens, the naturalization requirement being ten years residence in the country ; (iii) protection of religions and cultural rights of the Jewish community, such safeguards to be altered only with the consent of the majority of the Jewish members in the legislative assembly.

47. Jorge Garcia Grandos, The Birth of Israel (New York, 1948), pp.190-91, pp.208-10.

(c) That the constitution should provide also for (i) adequate representation in the legislative assembly of all important communities, provided that the Jews would in no case exceed one third of the total number of members; (ii) the strict prohibition of Jewish immigration and the continuation of the existing restrictions on land transfer, any change in these matters requiring the consent of majority of the Arab members of the Legislative Assembly (iii) the establishment of a Supreme Court which would be empowered to determine whether any legislation was inconsistent with the constitution.⁴⁸ In advance of its meeting in Geneva, UNSCOP dispatched a sub committee headed by Mr. Hood, the Australian Representative, to examine the conditions of the Jewish displaced persons in Austria and Germany.

After four months of studying reports, documents and memoranda, holding hearings with individuals and groups, and making field trips to observe conditions, UNSCOP submitted its report on August 31, 1947.⁴⁹ Since the Committee could not agree among themselves on one solution to the Palestine

48. Ibid., p.40.

49. Ibid., pp.47-64, 42-46.

problem, UNSCOP submitted both a majority and a minority report, with Australia not subscribing to either. Australia's position was that UNSCOP's task was not to back any specific proposal, but only to present the various alternatives with their advantages and disadvantages, and then leave the final decision to the General Assembly, based on the merits of the opposing solutions.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, in addition to proposing a solution, UNSCOP made eleven recommendations upon which the members agreed unanimously, and a twelfth recommendation to which Guatemala and Uruguay dissented. Among other points, the twelfth recommendation proposed (1) the British mandate over Palestine be terminated as soon as possible and the country be given independence at the earliest practicable date, with the United Nations assuming responsibility for Palestine in the interim, (2) provision be made for safeguarding the Holy places; (3) the General Assembly find a solution to the Jewish refugees in Europe by international action which should be aimed toward immediate alleviation of the plight of the Palestine problem; (4) solution of the Palestine

⁵⁰. Khouri, n.35, p.47.

problem not to be considered as a solution to the entire Jewish problem.⁵¹

Following the twelve recommendations UNSCOP presented its majority plan for the Palestine state with economic union between the halves. The members supporting this solution were from Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden and Uruguay. The plan provided for the division of Palestine into an independent Arab State and an independent Jewish State. The Jerusalem Bethlehem enclave was to be placed under an international trusteeship administered by the U.N. The two states would be linked together by an economic union which would have common currency, custom union etc. The division would not take place until September 1, 1949, and Britain would continue to administer the Mandate during the transition period.⁵² To gain Britains acquiescence, the majority plan provided that Britain should continue its administration "an such conditions and subject to such supervision." as might be

51. UNSCOP Report, 1947, IV, pp.42-46.

52. Ibid., pp.48-49. Britain had declared that she would terminate the mandate before September 1949, but the recommendation was made despite this. Moreover this was an indirect invitation to United States to share in the responsibility of implementing the partition plan, since the U.S. had on many occasion supported Zionist demands to admit 100,000 Jews to Palestine.

agreed upon between the United Kingdom and the United Nations" , and if so desired, with the assistance of one or more members of the United Nations".⁵³ Another important point in the majority report was that it called for the admission of 150,000 Jews during the transitional period.

The boundaries of the proposed Arab State would include the coastal plain from Isdud to the line between Egypt and Palestine which existed during the Mandate period. The boundary would extend north to the hill country of Samaria and Judea, excluding Jerusalem, to Western Galilee. The proposal Jewish State would include eastern Galilee, the Esdraelon plain, most of the coastal plain, and the Negev. The distribution of population in the two proposed states had been recorded for UNSCOP'S purposes as follows:

	Jews	Arabs and others	Total
The Jewish State	498,000	407,000	905,000
The Arab State	10,000	725,000	735,000
City of Jerusalem	100,000	105,000	205,000

In addition there would be about 90,000 Bedouins in the Jewish State.⁵⁴

53. Ibid., p.48.

54. Ibid., p.54. The Government of Palestine reported the total Jewish population in July 1947 to be 625,000. There also may have been a number of illegal, unregistered immigrants not included in this total.

The constitutions of both states were to include provision for the protection and free access to the Holy Places. Jewish immigration would be permitted during the transition period, and for an additional period of three years, depending on the capacity of the country to absorb such refugees. The absorptive capacity would be determined by an international commission set up for a period of three years and would be composed of three Arabs, three Jews and three representative of the United Nations.

The majority report did not take into consideration repeated Arab threats that they would oppose partition by all possible means. It also failed to indicate how the UNSCOP felt that the economic unity between the two states would be achieved in the face of the establishment of two political entities in the midst of a highly charged emotional atmosphere between the Arabs and the Jews.

The minority plan suggested a single state with a federal structure. Supporting this plan were the representatives of India, Iran and Yugoslavia. The federal state would comprise an Arab State and a Jewish State, with Jerusalem as its capital. This federal state would be created over a transitional period of three years, during

which the responsibility for administering the country would repose in an authority designated by the United Nations. There would also be a federal legislature established for each of the Arab and Jewish states, each having control over all local affairs except immigration. Controls over immigration into the Jewish state was to be entrusted to an international commission composed of three representatives - one a Palestinian Arab, one a Palestinian Jew, and third representing the United Nations. This commission would determine the absorptive capacity of the Jewish state "having due regard for the rights of the population then present within that state and for their anticipated natural rate of increase".⁵⁵

It was assumed that the minority report, like the majority report would not be opposed by the concerned parties in Palestine. Consequently neither report made concrete suggestions for handling any violent opposition as the special session, and despite the recalcitrant attitude of the Arab Higher Committee. The Arabs apparently still thought that they would be able to persuade those

55. Ibid., pp.60-64.

responsible for making recommended solutions on the problem that their side was stronger and deserved a favourable response.

After the recommendations of the UNSDOP were made public, the reaction of the Arab states was universal in denouncing the report. The Lebanese Prime Minister said:

the logic evaded the true facts in the matter... Arab states will utilize all diplomatic means, whether inside the United Nations, or inside other international organisations, to convince Zionist supporters of the futility of their support. If international methods fails, the Arab states will not hesitate to use other means to eradicate this danger...."56

The Secretary General of the Arab League was reported to say "The Arab States refuse to accept the recommendations of the United Nations special committee....merely a decision twisting the facts of Palestine in favor of the Zionist minority."57

The Political Committee of the Arab League met in Lebanon and issued the following communique:

56. Al-Ahram (Cairo), September 14, 1947 Quoted in Z. Hamadan, p.28, p.70.

57. Al-Ahram September 16, 1947, Quoted in Z. Hamadan, n.28, p.70.

The Political Committee considers the recommendations of UNSCOP are contrary to the natural rights of the Palestinian Arabs.. implementation of the recommendations would endanger peace and security not only in Palestine, but in the other Arab States as well... Committee decided to fight implementation by all effective practical means, as well as any other solution that might be devised which did not ensure independence of Palestine as an Arab state ... Arabs of Palestine will never surrender to any solution which deprives them of their homeland or destroys its unity...they will fight a fierce, fight to defend them country especially when they know that the Arab states will stand behind them with men, money and ammunition....⁵⁸

The Arab leaders referred to preferably taking action through the United Nations or some other international body, and that the other threatened action will be taken only if the diplomatic attempts fail. It would seem that at this state the Arab states were still confident that they could gain their way through the medium of United Nations.

58. Al-Ahram, September 21, 1947. As quoted in Z. Hamadan, p.n.28, p.71.

The UNSCOP Report before the Ad hoc Committee

The General Assembly opened its session in September 1947 with an agenda which included the UNSCOP report. The check question of Palestine which had been submitted to the first special session in April, and a new joint proposal of the Arab states for the "Termination of the Mandate over Palestine and the Recognition of its independence as one state." Before the General Assembly examined the Palestine question in detail, it referred it to the General Committee for recommendation. That Committee recommended the establishment of and AD HOC committee to study the recommendations of UNSCOP and report to the [Assembly its own recommendations. When the General Assembly considered forming such an AD HOC committee delegations from two Arab States opposed the recommendation. The Arab opposition was based on their deeply felt apprehension that external pressure could be mobilized within the United Nations against such a committee and that their cause would be greatly endangered. The Iraqi delegate opposed the establishment of an AD HOC committee and proposed instead that the Palestine problem be considered in the political committee.⁵⁹ Supporting his colleague, the delegate from Lebanon declared:

59. General Assembly Official Records, Second Session, 1947, Vol. I, pp. 272-73.

I want to state frankly another consideration which worries us; that is, that if you set aside a special committee to consider this problem, we feel that it is more possible to have certain pressure groups exert their influence to the maximum upon such a special committee than if the question were dealt with by the Political Committee which would, at the same time, be examining all the other important questions.⁶⁰

But despite Arab opposition, the General Assembly on the same day set up an AD HOC committee on the Palestine question consisting of all members of the Assembly. AD HOC committee elected H.V. Evatt of Australia as its Chairman, and decided as one of the first orders of business to invite both the Arab Higher Committee and the Jewish Agency of Palestine to be present at its deliberations. On its agenda, the committee had three items: (1) question of Palestine as proposed by the United Kingdom (2) report of UNSCOP; (3) termination of the Mandate over Palestine and recognition of its independence as a unitary state, as proposed by Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

The representative of the Arab Higher Committee was invited to give his views before the AD HOC committee, and

61. Ibid., p.275,

he rejected both the majority and minority recommendations for a solution as unworkable and unacceptable to the Arabs of Palestine. Instead, he proposed a general plan for a unitary independent state of PalestineArab of course.⁶²

The delegation from the Arab States, themselves also rejected both the majority and minority solutions of the UNSCOP declaring that both such plans violated the Charter of the United Nations and the inherent right of a people to self determination. The Arab States also supported the demands of the Higher Committee on October 4, 1947, The Lebanese representative informed the committee that the British Government: " Had no right to dispose of a country over which it had no jurisdiction. From the standpoint of international morality, the Balfour Declaration was completely without foundation and that the fact it had been incorporated into the mandate for Palestine did not give it any added validity."⁶³ The delegate from Lebanon also cited prior British statements that the British Government had not intended to create a Jewish state in Palestine.⁶⁴ As far as

62. Ad hoc Committee on the Palestine Question, Summary Records of the third meeting, A/Ac, 14/Ac. 14/SR 3 of September 30, 1947, p.7.

63. Ad hoc Committee, Fourth meeting, October 4, 1947, p.4.

64. Command (Cmd) 1700, 1922.

the UNSCOP report went, the Lebanese delegate, Mr., Chamoun, said that the majority plan would create friction instead of bringing a solution to the Palestine problem. In particular, Chamoun, said that the the distribution of territories for the two proposed states was unequal, that the area of the proposed Jewish state was six thousand square miles, while that of the Arabs was only about four thousand square miles. He felt the figure 407,000 given for the Arab population in the proposed Jewish state should properly be 500,000⁶⁵ Mr. Chamoun continued by stating that according to the majority plan proposed by UNSCOP:

In the Arab State, the Jewish minority would be small (8,000 to 10,000) while in the Jewish state the Arab population would be the same or even greater than that of Jews. In settling the frontiers and the compositions of the two proposed states, the majority of the Special Committee had given all the advantages to the Jews without thought of the subjection of the Arabs in the future Jewish state.⁶⁶

65. Ad hoc Committee, fifth meeting, p.4.

66. Ibid.

The Saudi-Arabian representative, Amir Faisal blamed Great Britain, the United States and the United Nations for complicating the Palestine problem. He declared that Great Britain was at fault over the turn of events in Palestine", "because of her encouragement of Jewish immigration and her failure to respect promises made to the Arabs."⁶⁷ Regarding the United States, the Saudi Arabian representative asked why the American government would not allow the Jewish refugees into its own country. He also criticised those American congressmen and other officials who advocated the admission of an unlimited number of immigrants into Palestine without first taking into consideration and consulting the Arab population.⁶⁸ Amir Faisal also criticized those United Nations members who had declared that the partition would solve the Palestine problem, while such a solution "would create a grave precedent for religious minorities and political groups to make similar claims".⁶⁹

Now all of this general debate was taking place before the General Assembly in its guise as the Ad Hoc Committee.

67. Ibid., fifteenth meeting, p.1.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

Nevertheless, since the question was an emotional one, the chairman continued to hear testimony after testimony bearing on the issue. The United States, for example, announced her support of the majority report of UNSCOP, with certain modifications. These modifications included more constitutional guarantees and a few territorial modifications.⁷⁰ Mr. Hershel V. Johnson stressed the United States' conviction that the responsibility for keeping law and order in Palestine still would reside in the Mandatory power. He briefly referred to the problem of implementing the majority view by asserting the American Government's willingness to participate in any efforts initiated by the United Nations to solve the conflict that might arise, either through contributing money, or in meeting the need for keeping internal law and order during the transition period. Towards the latter end, Mr. Johnson suggested a special constabulary or police force recruited on a volunteer basis by the United Nations.⁷¹ Two days later the Soviet Union declared agreement with the United States on the proposed solution to the Palestine problem including

70. Jaffa, for example, was proposed to be included in the Arab State.

71. Ad hoc Committee, 11th meeting, p.3.

partition. Mr. Tsarapkin informed the AD HOC committee that because Arab-Jewish relations had greatly deteriorated, it "had become impossible to reconcile their points of view on the solution to this problem; and the minority's proposal therefore appeared impracticable. Thus the partition proposed by the majority offered more hope of realization"⁷²

The Jewish Agency rejected the minority plan, and also, and announced its acceptance of UNSCOPS majority proposal, which provided for partition, subject to certain territorial and other modifications. Elaborating on the Jewish Agency's view point concerning the recommendation of UNSCOP, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver told the AD HOC committee that on behalf of the Jewish Agency, he approved, with one exception the committees eleven unanimous recommendations.⁷³ The exception was recommendation six which had to do with Jewish displaced persons. Rabbi Silver stated that the Jewish Agency did not disapprove this recommendation, but it would like to call attention to the "intense urge" of the majority of these displaced persons to

72. Ibid., 12th Meeting, p.2.

73. Ad hoc Committee, 4th meeting, p.4.

go to Palestine. Rabbi Silver said the Jewish Agency did not accept the solution advanced by the minority report because," though it called them States, it actually made provision only for semi-autonomous cantons or provinces. Palestine would be an Arab state with Jewish enclaves, the Jews-would be frozen in the position of a permanent minority in the federal state, and would not even have control over their own fiscal policies or immigration."⁷⁴

Regarding the majority proposal of UNSCOP, the representative of the Jewish Agency declared that:

The Majority proposals did not satisfy the Jewish people. The Balfour Declaration, according to Mr. Lloyd George, the then Prime Minister, implied that the whole of Palestine, including Transjordan, should ultimately become a Jewish state. Yet Transjordan was cut off from Palestine in 1922 and later set up as an Arab Kingdom, and now a second Arab state was to be carved out of the remainder of the country; finally, the Jewish National Home would represent less than one side for it. Such a sacrifice should not be asked of the Jewish people.⁷⁵

74. Ibid., p.5.

75. Ibid.

However, Rabbi Silver told the committee that the Jewish Agency would accept the partition as recommended by the majority plan as a lesser evil, subject to further discussion of constitutional and territorial provisions.⁷⁶ When the Ad HOC committee convened for its nineteenth session, it decided to close the general debate. The Chairman, Mr. Evatt, decided to create three sub committees to make a detailed study of the findings of UNSCOP and report on them.

The first committee was composed of nine pro-partition states and was delegated the task of drawing up a detailed plan that would support the UNSCOP majority proposal. Because the Arab Higher Committee again refused an annotation to attend the sub-committees meetings, while the Jewish Agency accepted - the deliberation and final report of the sub-committee were biased and completely one-sided.⁷⁷

The second sub-committee was composed of five Arab States, pro-Arab Pakistan and Afghanistan and neutral Colombia. This group was given the responsibility of drawing

76. Ibid., p.6.

77. Khouri, n.35, p.48.

up a scheme for a single, unified Palestine. Both Arab members and Colombia complained that the subcommittee only represented opposite view points and requested that uncommitted states be added to each group to help find some middle ground that might permit a compromise agreement. When the Chairman, Mr Evatt, ignored the requests Colombia withdrew from the sub-committee, leaving only the Arabs and Pro Arabs as members.⁷⁸

The third subcommittee had the task of conciliating the two opponents, but it did not function at all. No group was set up to study the UNSCOP minority report, or any other possible solution at all. With the nonactivity of the third sub-committee, the General Assembly was to be advised by two prejudiced sub-committees representing the opposite poles of possible solution.⁷⁹

The second sub-committee's report contained three proposals, and was perhaps not as one sided as the report of the first committee. The proposals were, first, that the General Assembly ask for an advisory opinion from the

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid., p.49.

international Court of Justice on the legal questions concerning the League of Nation's mandate and the United Nations competence to act in the case; the second proposal concerned the settlement of Jewish problem; and the third proposal called for the establishment of a unitary government in Palestine.⁸⁰

The Ad-HOC committee first considered the proposals of the second sub-committee. At the thirty second meeting of the Ad Hoc committee on November 25, 1947, the votes were taken. The first draft resolution, or proposal, which asked for an advisory opinion from the International Court was voted upon in two parts. The first part was rejected by a vote of 18 for , 25 against, with 11 abstentions.⁸¹ The second part was that which would ask the International Court of Justice to rule " whether the United Nations or any of its members, is competent to enforce or recommend the enforcement of any proposal concerning the constitution and in particular, any plan of partition which is contrary to the wishes, or adopted without the consent of the

80. Ad hoc Committee, 23 Meeting, p.3.

81. Ibid., 32 meeting, pp.2-3.

inhabitants of Palestine." This proposal was also rejected by a vote of 21 to 20, with 13 abstentions.⁸²

The voting and the narrow margin on the last question reveals that those states voting for it doubted the legality of the partition plan. The second draft proposal was originally voted on paragraph by paragraph and failed. The proposal accordingly was amended and resubmitted for consideration. The amended draft proposal received 16 votes for, 16 against, and 26 abstentions. Because of the tie vote, they agreed to include the proposal in its report to the General Assembly.⁸³ The third draft proposal concerning the independent unitary state of Palestine was defeated by a vote of 13 to 29, with 14 abstentions.⁸⁴

After disposing of the proposals that tended to favour the Arab-side, the Ad HOC committee moved to consider the recommendation of the first subcommittee, which called for the partition plan with economic union. The committee voted to adopted a series of amendment, the most important of which was to leave the decision to the General Assembly to

82. Ibid., p.3.

83. Ibid., pp.4-6.

84. Ibid., p.6.

select the commission to implement its recommendations, in place of the *Five nation commission* already designated. The amended draft resolution was adopted by a vote of 25 for, 13 against, and 17 mabstentions.⁸⁵ This simple majority vote was sufficient to adopt the partition resolution in the Ad HOC committee, but for the resolution to pass in the General Assembly it would be necessary that it receive a two thirds majority vote.

The outcome of the votes before the ad Hoc committee could only be viewed as another setback for the Arabs, at the same time representing a significant triumph for the Zionists and their supporters. The delegations from the Arab states protested against the partition resolution on the grounds that it was impractical, unjust and against the charter of the United Nations. The fact that the Ad Hoc committee adopted the partition resolution undoubtedly was the big step in achieving Zionist aims in Palestine. The first Zionist objective had been the recognition of the "National Home" in Palestine which in their view meant an independent state. The second objective was the recognition

85. Ibid., p.3.

of the Jewish Agency as the legal representative of the Jews in Palestine.⁸⁶ Empowered to negotiate the attainment of the third objectivean independent Jewish State in Palestine recognized by the United Nations.⁸⁷

There were a number of occurrences unfavourable to the Arab cause. None of them were fatal of course but their cumulative effect certainly was enough to deal the Arabs a blow. This is necessary to review the actions of the Ad Hoc committee. In the first place, the formation of the Ad Hoc committee was in itself an extra ordinary occurrence, Had the question of the UNSCOP report been referred to the Political Committee, the Arabs would have had fared better. In the Political Committee there would have been a more reasoned, less emotional approach to the question than was the case in AD Hoc committee. In addition, the Arab states would not have had to face the fact of the two diametrically opposed subcommittees that did arise under the Ad Hoc committee. Further, the problem of personal feelings towards particular delegates influencing the opinion toward their parent states would not have been as likely if the Political

86. John and Hadawi, n.3, p.247.

87. Allan R. Tayler, Prelude to Israel: An Analysis of Zionist Diplomacy, 1897-1947 (London, 1961), p.102.

Committee were taking the action and making the recommendation.

The Zionists were able to more favourably impress the delegates from the other nations than the Arabs were. The Jewish case was presented by only three members of the Jewish Agency, in contrast to the Arabs who had a large number of diverse individuals making supporting, but often contradictory speeches for their cause. As a result, the Jews were able to be direct and incisive, and put their case forward in a logical and reasonable manner. They based their claims not only the plea that Palestine had been historically inhabited by Jews, but also on the legal status of the Balfour Declaration and the British mandate. The Jewish spokesman made the best use of their limited time before the committee to impress the members that their cause was right.

On the otherhand the Arabs were not more skilled as politicians and statesmen than they were or they would, perhaps, have recognized that they were belaboring their points and boring their listeners. In addition, had they been more seasoned the Arabs may have been able to avoid some of their blunders, such as giving an inaccurate version

of documents that were well known to many of the other delegates. When the delegates from Egypt and Iraq stated that they had never accepted the British mandate as legal, it could be pointed out that both the countries joined the League of Nations and agreed to subscribe to all the requirements of membership, that the League of Nations had legally made. The British mandate over Palestine was one such action that the League of Nations had legally committed. It was too late before either the Ad Hoc committee or the General Assembly for the two Arab states to then say that they had registered reservations about seeing to uphold the mandate, for even if such reservation had been made and there was no evidence they had been it would have been necessary for the League of Nations to approve such reservations before membership would be approved.⁸⁸

General Assembly and the Adoption of Partition Resolution in its Second Session

In spite of serious setbacks earlier the Arabs were intent upon their attempt to avoid partition. Uptil now

88. See Jacob Robinson, Palestine and the United Nations (1947) Chapters XIII and XIV.

While Jacob loads the Zionists the pinpoints every slip made by the Arabs in the U.N. The way the author portrayed the Arab action, it may be, it appeared, the same to the members of the U.N. at that time.

there had not yet been anyshow of power by the Zionists that would indicate that the two thirds majority required could be mustered by them to vote for participation. At the General Assembly active lobbying was on by both those favouring partition and by those against it. The Arab states needed only a few votes to prevent the decision from going against them. But this was perhaps the only point they could count on. The Zionists on the other hand, were backed by a substantial number of countries, including the United States and Russia, but had not yet gained an assured number of votes to win partition.

The debate on the draft resolution passed by the Ad Hoc committee began on November 26, 1977. The Arabs repeated their opposition, using generally the same arguments they had used before for the partition resolution not to be considered or adopted. Prince Saif EL Islam Abdullah of Yemen spoke in opposition, reminding the Assembly:

The Arabs of Palestine have agreed to great the Jews in Palestine equal rights. They overlooked the fact that many of the Jews had immigrated into Palestine against the will of the inhabitants. They overlooked all that for the sake of cooperation and peace. Can anyone then accuse the Arabs of being unreasonable or arbitrariness causing a breach of peace?⁸⁹

89. General Assembly, Official Records, second session, 124th Plenary meeting, November 26, 1947, Vol. III, p.1316.

The Arabs seemed only to repeat the same words that had been used before on the floor of the General Assembly and make their primary move behind the scenes by trying to influence some of the uncommitted nations to vote against partition. They had yet not withdrawn from a parliamentary way of handling the issue. However they were beginning to realize the value of politicking and lobbied for votes while the debates were made.

Britain, which had been quiescent during the entire issue, and had generally abstained from voting on all questions involving the Palestine problem, was willing to withdraw its troops and influence from Palestine in any event. Sir Alexander Cadogan announced the British plan for withdrawal by August 1948. He further added:

The Government of the United Kingdom does not consider that the Mandate required it to establish either the Jewish State or an Arab State in Palestine by force, or to coerce either people in the interest of the other, nor is it prepared now to accept any responsibility which would involve the use of British troops as the means of enforcing a decision against either people.⁹⁰

90. Ibid., pp.1323-24.

At the penury meeting of the General Assembly, the attitude of the American delegation was strongly in favour of adopting the Ad Hoc committee resolution. The American delegate personally gave his support to the proposal in private, but not to the degree he displayed in the General Assembly. This luke warm support of partition may be attributed to the influence of the specialists in the State Department who emphasized the American strategic and economic interests in the Arab world. The Joint Chief of Staff were also against the partition plan for it appeared to them that it was most likely that the plan would result in armed conflict.

With a lukewarm Ambassador to the U.N. influential members of the State Department being against partition as it was not supposed to be in the best interest of the United States in maintaining its position in the Middle East, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff and military establishment against being against partition, it was important to know who was for it?⁹¹

91. The answer to this is that the Zionist Organisation mounted a spectacular propaganda effort which convinced the majority of American that the Jews were in right.

At the plenary meeting however Mr. Johnson stated that the partition plan was not "perfect in every detail", but that it offered "the best practical present opportunity and possibility of obtaining, in a future foreseeable to us now, a peaceful settlement in Palestine."⁹² He defended the legal competence of the General Assembly to adopt the proposed resolution. He said, "the General Assembly has, in our view, the undoubted authority under Article 10 to discuss and make recommendations regarding any subject within the scope of the Charter, and under article 14 to recommend measures for the peaceful adjustment of any situation".⁹³ Mr. Johnson explained further that although both the Arab and the Jewish states clearly defined boundaries, these would be "as freely crossed as the boundaries which separate the individual states and will be as friendly as the boundary which runs for three thousand miles between Canada and the United State"⁹⁴

The climax of the efforts coordinated between American officials and the Zionists began with the plenary meeting of

92. General Assembly, Official Records, Second Session, 124th Plenary Meeting Nov. 26, 1947, Vol. III, p.1325.

93. Ibid., p.1326.

94. Ibid., p.1327.

the General Assembly and culminated with the adoption of the partition resolution on November 29, 1947. During this period, "every clue was meticulously checked and pursued. Even the smallest or the remotest of nations was contacted and wooed. Nothing was left to chance."⁹⁵ The American delegate, with apparent instruction from White House, and the Zionists jointly exerted strong pressures to enlist the support of the majority of the UN members for the partition plan. To illustrate this pressure. Kermit Roosevelt wrote "what happened at the United Nations was a repeat performance of what had already happened in the United States. Using the same methods that had been so successful here, and having the United States Government to assist in their use there the Zionists succeeded in getting what they wanted."⁹⁶ In explaining the role of the White House in the passage of the partition resolution, Sumner Wells, former Assistant Secretary of State, wrote: "By direct order of the White House, every form of pressure, direct or indirect, was brought to bear by American officials upon these countries outside of the Moslem world that were known to be either

95. Emanuel Newman, American Zionist, February, 1953.

96. Kermit Roosevelt, "The Partition of Palestine: A lesson in Pressure Politics", Middle East Journal, 11:1, (January, 1948), p.15.

uncertain or opposed to partition. Representatives or intermediaries were employed by the White House to make sure that the necessary majority would at length be secured".⁹⁷

In his speech before the General Assembly, Mahmoud Fawzi referred to the pressure that had been put on members of the Ad-Hoc committee to vote in favour of the partition. Without mentioning the United States by name, he said:

We have been told about the situation in which one of the great powers find itself, about the predicament in which it thinks, or perhaps feels, that it is entangled. We have been told concerning that great power, that being confronted with the imminence of a general national election, its candidates seek the vote of a single component state, and that vote depends on the Jewish electorate of a single city. Thus is its policy dictated with regard to a Palestine which is more than five thousand miles away.⁹⁸

The same day Lebanese delegate spoke in a more blunt fashion than his colleague from Egypt about the pressure and maneuvers to which United Nations members are subjected

97. Welles Summer, We Need Not Fail, (Boston, 1948), p.63.

98. General Assembly Official Records, second session, 124th meeting, November 26, 1947, Vol. III, p.1330.

"During the last thirty six hours". We declared further, that "if we were to abandon this for the tyrannical system of tackling delegation in a hotel room, to threaten them with economic sanctions or to bribe them with promises in order to compel them to vote one way or another, think of what our organization would become in the future".⁹⁹ Later in his speech Mr. Camille Chamoun referred to the United States by name "which throughout its history has represented for all peoples the ideals of liberty, justice and equity. I am forced to note that unfortunately that giant, the United States, is putting on the fatal shirt of Nessus."¹⁰⁰

The representative of Saudi Arabia Amir Faisal Al Saud, appealed for justice to the Palestinians and their struggle for independence, "Prove, gentlemen ... that you are only for right and justice and that you are not subject to enticement. Prove that right, justice and the halting of aggression come before anything else. The small nations have depended on your organization to safeguard their rights and guarantee their safety their safety and security".¹⁰¹

99. Ibid., p.1341.

100. Ibid.

101. Ibid., p.1338.

The Syrian delegate summed up Arab attitude, " We have voiced here the uneasiness of the Arabs in Palestine and in all the Arab countries. In their opinion, this plan is contrary to the principles of justice and to their natural rights, since their rights to independence are not questioned.¹⁰²

The occasion was rare when the U.S. and U.S.S.R. were to be on the same side in an issue. The Polish delegates paid tribute to their joint efforts, but when the Soviet delegate, Mr Gromyko, spoke, he strongly supported the partition plan and condemned the maneuvering behind the scenes for the passage of the partition proposal.

He declared that the Soviet Union "has no intention of maneuvering and manipulating votes as unfortunately is done at the Assembly, especially in connection with the consideration of the Palestine question".¹⁰³ Before the General Assembly adjourned, Belgium, which had abstained from voting before the Ad Hoc committee announced that she would vote in favour of partition.¹⁰⁴ Haiti, which had abstained

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid., p.1363.

104. Ibid., p.1365.

before, announced her opposition to partition.¹⁰⁵ General Romula the Philippine Foreign Minister, announced that his vote would be against partition.¹⁰⁶

The Arab States counted votes ~~at~~ this time, and felt that if the vote were to be taken on ~~the~~ Wednesday, November 26, ^{that} ~~that~~ there was enough Arab support to prevent the two-thirds majority needed to pass the partition resolution. Only one more vote in the Ad Hoc Committee would have constituted the necessary number, but the Arabs were now confident that they had prevented the closing of that one-vote margin and wanted an immediate vote on the issue. To their bitter disappointment there was the announcement by the President of the Assembly that the planned evening session would be cancelled and the Assembly would not meet on the next day, which was Thanksgiving day. Putting off the vote until Friday would give the American Zionist group the opportunity to pressure some more votes to their side, and the Arab delegates pleaded in vain for the planned session to be held. The proposal to adjourn until Friday, November 28 was carried by a close vote, 24 to 21.¹⁰⁷ The rejection

105. Ibid., p.1354.

106. Ibid., pp.1314-15.

107. Khoury, n.35, p.55.

of a vote on Partition at a session that night, was agreed upon after Zionist supporters found that they still lacked an assured two third majority, wrote Thomas J. Hamilton of New York Times on 13 March 1947.

It was the United States delegation which was taking the lead in supporting partition and seeking to influence in favour of the Zionist position. The Soviet Union had, of course no problem in securing the solid support of the East European Communist governments for partition.

The General Assembly did adjourn, and when it reconvened on November 28, the Arabs guessed rightly that their strength diminished over the holiday. The Arabs tried to extend the time before the vote. Their proposal to consider the minority report and other alternatives which had not yet been considered and again on January 15, 1948, the report was not yet admitted, for the partition resolution had already been introduced and had to be voted on before any such proposal as they had made.¹⁰⁸ Zafrullah Khan, the Pakistani delegate, gave a speech criticizing the partition plan. He also referred to the pressure to which

108. Ibid., p.56.

the UN members had been subjected and the inexplicable attitude of the American Government in not recommending that the Jews settle outside Palestine, and possibly in the United States.¹⁰⁹

France proposed for a twenty four hour delay and it was accepted. The Arabs had a little more breathing time, but the next day the General Assembly convened to vote on the partition resolution. Before the vote was taken, more countries changed their positions. Belgium, luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Liberia and France, all of which had abstained in the AD Hoc committee vote, now opted for position. Paraguay, which had been absent before, decided to vote in favour of the resolution. Haiti and the Philippines, both of which were ready to side with the Arabs on Wednesday, now cast their votes for partition. Greece, which had previously abstained now voted against partition; Chile shifted its position from "in favour: to abstention. And, finally. Siam which had earlier voted with the Arab had its credentials withdrawn by a new government which had committed a coup et al in the country.

109. General Assembly, Official Records, Second Session, 124th Plenary Meeting, November 26, 1947, Vol.III, pp.1366-69.

When the final tally was made, the partition resolution was adopted by the General Assembly by a vote of 33 to 13 with 10 abstentions.¹¹⁰ The abstentions were almost as vital to assuring the necessary majority as were votes in favour, since they were not counted in the equation for a two third majority.

After the partition resolution was adopted, the delegates of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria and Yemen, rose in turn to say that their countries did not consider themselves bound by the vote in favour of the partition of Palestine, for such a decision was contrary to the letter and spirit of the Charter.¹¹¹ As the bitter Arab delegates walked out of the Assembly Hall without waiting for the formal ending of the Assembly and the farewell speeches,

110. Ibid., pp.1424-25.

In Favour: Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Byelorussian S.S.R., Cananada, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Equador, France, Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, Liberia, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philipines, Poland, Sweden, Ukrainian S.S.R., Union of South Africa, U.S.S.R., U.S., Uruguay, Venezuela.

Against: Afghanistan, Cuba, Egypt, Greece, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Yemen.

Abstained: Argentina, Chile, Columbia, El-Salvador, Ethiopia, Honduras, Mexico, U.K., Yugoslavia.

111. John and Hadawi, n.3, p.266.

they solemnly announced that the United Nations had died. "Not died", said Faris el-Khoury, "Murderec[t]". They spoke of bloodshed to come and said the responsibility would not be their but would be on the shoulders of the countries that had pressed for partition.¹¹²

Dr. Chaim Weizmann, hailed the decision as 'A victory for international equity and cooperation.' In contrast, Meir Crossman, president of the United Zionist Revisionists, (I.Z.L. now Herut) of America described the action clearly unjustifiable. He said, "It is with deep sorrow that we received the decision of the United Nations to partition Palestine into two states and reduce the Jewish national territory from 44,000 to 5,500 square miles." He announced that the Revisionist movement would fight for a Jewish state within 'the historic boundaries of Palestine' with 'international consent.'¹¹³

The Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular did not accept the resolution for the partition of Palestine. Their attitude was is based on political, historical and juridical consideration.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid., p.268.

The first ground of invalidity of the resolution was based on the incompetence of the General Assembly of the U.N. to recommend the partition of Palestine or to create a Jewish state in the country.

The U.N. is an organisation of States which was formed for certain purposes defined in the Charter. At no time did this organisation possess any sovereignty or any other right on Palestine. The U.N. could not give what it did not possess.

The General Assembly, however did not think alike. It argued that it could deal with the Palestine Question since it has placed on its agenda as a result of a request made by the mandatory Power for a recommendation to be made under Article 10 of the Charter concerning the future government of Palestine. Article 10 provides:

The General Assembly may discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the present Charter... and, except as provided in Article 12, may make recommendations to the Members of the United Nations or to the Security Council or to both on any such questions or matters.

However, the power given by Article 10 to the General Assembly to discuss any question or matter within the scope

of the Charter cannot be enlarged so as to imply a power to break up the territorial integrity of a state or to create new states.

In 1947, the Arab States requested the General Assembly to refer the legal issues affecting the Palestine Question, including the question of its competence to recommend or enforce any plan of partition of Palestine, to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion.¹¹⁴ But the political forces which were then attempting to secure a favourable vote on partition were not anxious to have their efforts hampered by an adverse judicial ruling. They were able each time to vote down every proposal to refer an issue to the International Court.¹¹⁵

It is no secret that the resolution for the partition of Palestine was obtained by means of Zionist influence and American political pressure. The Zionists gained to their

114. Henry Cattán, Palestine and International Law (London, 1973), p.47.

115. For the several denials in 1947 by the General Assembly of requests of an advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice on the Palestine Question, see UN Documents A/Ac 14/21, 14 October 1947; A/Ac 14/24, 16 October 1947; A/Ac 14/25, 16 October 1947; and A/Ac 14/32, 11 November 1947.

cause President Truman, who put the weight of the U.S. Government in support of partition. In his Memoirs President Truman complains about Zionist pressure:

The facts were that not only were these pressure movements around the United Nations unlike anything that had been seen there before but that the White House, too, was subjected to a constant barrage. I do not think I ever had as much pressure and propaganda aimed at the White House as I had in this instance ...Some of the extreme Zionist leaders were even suggesting that we pressure sovereign nations into favourable votes in the General Assembly.¹¹⁶

However, President Truman does not disclose his own role and his own pressures in favour of Zionism and of the partition plan. He only briefly mentions. "I instructed the State Department to support the partition plan".¹¹⁷

In 1946, the total population of Palestine amounted to 1,972,000 inhabitants comprising 1,203,000 Moslems, 145,000 Christians and 608,000 Jews.¹¹⁸ Only one tenth of these Jews

116. Harry S. Truman, Memoirs, Vol. II, (New York, 1965), p.158.

117. Ibid., p.155.

118. UN Document A/Ac 14/32, p.304, 11 November, 1947.

were part of the original inhabitants and belonged to the country. In fact, the original Jewish Palestinian Community did not, favour the partition of Palestine or creation of the Jewish state. The rest of the Jewish population was composed of foreign immigrants originating mostly from Poland, the U.S.S.R. and Central Europe. Only one third of these Jewish immigrants had acquired Palestinian citizenship.¹¹⁹

In terms of land ownership, the Jews then owned, 1,491,699 dunams¹²⁰ of land exclusive of urban property out of a total area of 26,323,023 dunams in Palestine. Thus Jewish land ownership amounted to 5.66 per cent of the total area of the country. In contrast, the Palestine Arabs owned 12,574,774 dunams i.e. 47.77 percent of the area of the country. The rest was public property.¹²¹

The partition attributed to the Jews who were less than one third of the population and owned less than six percent

119. Cattar, n.114, p.55.

120. One dunam equals one thousand square meters.

121. Cattar, n.114, p.55.

of the land an area exceeding 14,500 square kilometers and representing 57 percent of the area of Palestine. This meant that the Jews were given a territory which was ten times the area owned by them in the whole of Palestine".¹²²

The partition resolution was basically a political decision which was conceived, engineered and adopted through the efforts and pressures of the Zionists and their friends in violation of principles of law, justice, and democracy. The nullity of the partition resolution should not be rejected as a thing of past. What is happening in Palestine is a result of this unfortunate decision.

122. Ibid

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Zionism and imperialism were the roots of the Palestine problem. The problem stands as a challenge to the principles of law and humanity in the post imperial age. It is remarkable that when after the World War II actual decolonization had started it was only in Palestine that a colonial settler state was established. The contradiction between the principles of Western liberalism and support for a colonizing movement became obvious and resulted in the confirmation of Western duplicity and double standard. The powers involved in the question mainly U.K., U.S.A., and U.S.S.R. not only failed to resolve the original contradiction but also actively confirmed it by supporting the Jewish colonization and expulsion of the Arabs from their own country effecting the establishment of a Zionist state in Palestine. This was the amazing achievement of Zionism in the second half of the 20th Century, supposed to be an enlightened and democratic part of the century.

Zionism as a movement originated in the efforts of nineteenth century European Jews for creating a congenial atmosphere in which the Jews taking advantage of the modern ideas of emancipation and enlightenment attempted to retain at the beginning their own identity. This was however a

beginning but ultimately it culminated in the catastrophe for another people. From a Jewish point of view this was an essential endeavour and gave rise to many traditions. Among them the most important was the cultural renaissance which was based on the Jewish tradition and the Hebrew language. One of the results of this renaissance was the Jewish nationalism which contradicted the on going process of Jewish assimilation in the various West European nationalisms.

The movement that Herzl laid foundation of at Basle Congress in 1897 embraced a variety of Zionist interpretations: cultural, religious, socialist and political. The political "faction" remained dominant since its inception. It gathered added strength from religious and socialist faction. However Zionism gradually began to fashion itself as a settler movement with an aspiration of transforming Palestine into an exclusive Jewish state. It threw to winds the question of ethics, law and political realities to wrest for itself a political entity in Palestine.

It would be a misnomer to regard Zionism as a democratic movement that the Jewish intellectuals developed

and acquired for it a popular support. It will not be in appropriate to describe Zionist movement as directive populism in the words of Allan R. Taylor. Theodor Herzl was the self appointed founder director of this popular movement. In this movement many so-called factions developed which formed themselves into different organisations within the Zionist Congress. Thus Zionism consolidated itself through divergent methods. It therefore allowed diverse factions to assert for themselves while retaining a central leadership for providing unity of direction and purpose.

The establishment of the state of Israel was the culmination of a careful planning and organised activity for a "secular" national ideal. Long before anti-Semitism had reached its climax in Nazi Germany the Jewish national idea was formulated by the Zionist ideologies as the only effective programme for regeneration of the Jews as a modern people, though many Jewish thinkers and communities did not conform to this thesis. Though it was juxtaposed with the ideals of faith, the Zionist political leadership embarked on an intensive programme to convert the Jewish world to Zionism and to found a Jewish state in Palestine. One can discern the essential nature of Zionism by examining

the character of the movement in operation and by analysing its ideological foundations.

Herzl's vision and the search of its realization led the Zionists to develop a premise that end justified the means. With the issuance of the Balfour Declaration the Zionists made up their mind and threw themselves resolutely into the cause of advancement of the establishment of a Jewish state. The Zionists who had promised to engender the humanistic renaissance among the Jews, by the very nature of contradictions and compulsions of the Zionist movement degenerated into a bitter struggle over real estate with the Arabs of Palestine who constituted an absolute majority.

In spite of objections from saner Jewish quarters and protests by the Arabs the narrower concept of Zionism prevailed. Political leaders and ideologists coloured the Zionist movement with intense Jewish nationalism and gave it over to lesser considerations and motivations. On this plane three leaders played the most crucial role. Weizmann was a past master as far as sophisticated manipulation was concerned. Ben Gurion was a genius at mass conversion to Zionism and settlement, and Jabotinsky, of expansionist designs and armed strategy. These three pragmatic approaches lay at the root of Zionism's evolution.

Weizmann adopted the policy of "gradualism" and developed it into a political technique, in which aims were concealed, adhoc compromises arrived, and various forms of pressure and persuasion applied. The problem with this political method stance was that it cast an aura of secrecy and duplicity about the movement. When Weizmann accepted the Balfour Declaration, the Churchill White Paper, and the partition plan of the Royal Commission, he did not really agree to their terms or intend to abide by them.

For Weizmann the Balfour Declaration was only a beginning and from 1917 onwards he tried ceaselessly to circumvent its restrictive clauses without openly challenging their legality. His attitude towards the Churchill White Paper was also the same, and in the same vein he accepted the partition plan on the basis of its limited territorial concessions which could be expanded in time. Replying to the criticism for handing over Negev desert to Arabs he said that Negev would be there, and that it would not run away. Expansionism was also very much on the mind of Weizmann. The only thing was he always waited for the right moment to act.

David Ben Gurion adhered intensely to the concept of "Ingathering". Gurion may be accused for encompassing the

vast horizons of Jewish vision and endeavour within a parochial national system. His insistence that Zionism demanded immigration to Israel and allegiance to a single Jewish nationality reflected a horizon too limited for the Jews of the world. His parochialism that Zionists in the Diaspora were under obligation to assist the State of Israel unconditionally was said to be reactionary. To an emancipated Jew and the modern man the premises of "ingathering" was retrogressive.

However the Zionists like Weizmann, Ben Gurion, Juda Magnes and Abba Hillel Silver, who happened to be the pivotal actors on behalf of Zionism, activated other actors whom we may call the secondary actors particularly U.K., U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. and ultimately through them the United Nations.

The broad lines of struggle over Palestine had already emerged during World War I when the Western Allies, assuming that the Ottoman Empire would be dismembered upon its defeat, addressed the question of the fate of its non-Turkish territories. Palestine was the object of rivalry between British and French aspirations. It was, moreover, the vital focus of the World Zionist Organisation, which

had already achieved considerable progress in rallying world wide support for the objective of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine.

The British Government was prompted to take key actions affecting the future of Palestine under the exigencies of the World War I. The British calculated that a public expression of support for the principle of a Jewish national home in Palestine would enable the World Zionist Organisation to mobilize American Jews in support of the United States' entry into the war on the side of the Allied Powers. It would also influence the German Jews to shift their allegiance to Great Britain and influence the Russian Jews to dissuade the new revolutionary regime in Russia from abandoning the conflict with the Allies. Above all, the British aimed to keep the French out of Palestine. Apart from supposedly assisting "God's will" as they believed to be fulfilling, the above were the main motives of the Balfour Declaration. Balfour was no doubt an ardent convert to Zionism. Arnold Toynbee has remarked, "I will straight out declare Balfour was a wicked man". Fortunately for Balfour his Zionism and his serving of the British imperialist cause did not prove to be incompatible.

Toynbee believed that Balfour and his colleagues knew the catastrophic implications for the Arabs of fostering a White settler community, yet nevertheless decided to support the Jews as a means of sustaining the British influence in the eastern Mediterranean region. This was the callousness of imperialism at its height. The Balfour Declaration, as a historical premise, it was calculated, could be used to develop an argument going in the some direction; from a Jewish 'national home' to the Zionist state.

As part of the post-World War I settlement, Great Britain was awarded a League of Nations mandate over Palestine.

The Balfour Declaration was written into the document as a charge on the mandatory power. The phraseology of the mandate failed to clarify the ambiguous term "national home". The mandate gave discretionary power to Britain to establish a separate administration in the mandatory territory east of the Jordan River, which later became Trans-jordan.

Animosity between the Jewish communities was probably a factor which prompted Winston Churchill, then Britain's Colonial Secretary, to issue a White Paper in June 1922. In this he asserted that the status of Jews in Palestine under

the existing British administration in fact constituted the "national home" called for by the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate.

Nonetheless, Churchill was a Zionist, though his Zionism was not religious or evangelical in origin as of many other Gentiles. He also believed that Zionism had to 'go slow' so as not to arouse or offend the native Arabs. However he gave intermittent support to it. There were two key elements supporting his good 'British' sense for his sponsorship of Zionism. First, he believed that the Zionist movement commanded powerful political and economic influence particularly in the United States. As late as in December 1939, he lectured his cabinet colleagues on the important role the Zionists could play in mobilising American resources for the British war effort. He told them that it had not been for light or sentimental reasons that the Government had issued the Balfour Declaration in 1917, but in order to mobilise American support. In 1939 Churchill believed that history could repeat itself. He expected that the Zionists through their friends in America could exert considerable influence for an early American entry into the war.

The second element was that the Zionist could be hired for some other purposes quite apart from the influence to be

acquired in Washington, e.g. Zionist capital and technology could develop Palestine as an imperial outpost at a minimal cost to the British tax payer. In his imperial mould Churchill thought of the Zionists nothing more than the policemen in the region to safeguard and further the British imperial interests in Palestine.

The British also attempted to refute the contention of Shariff Hussein and the Arab nationalists that the McMahon correspondence had promised Palestine independence as part of a fully sovereign Arab state.

The period of the British administration may be summed up by stating that no common ground could be found for the accommodation of the two nationalisms, whether by the partition proposed by the Royal Commission report of 1937 (the Peel Report), or by the "binational" solution of the White Paper of 1939;

The British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, sought the solution of a "binational state" in the hope that concerted action with the United States might guarantee the security of the Jewish minority in Palestine, thereby allowing Britain to remain on good terms with the Arab world in general.

The Labour Government's Palestine policy revolved round the role of Ernest Bevin. It all started with the initial effort to cling to Palestine that gave way to internationalizing the issue. Recent studies have shown that Bevin was not anti-semitic as he was sometimes accused to be by the Zionists. He was only pro-British. The Labour's strategy in the Middle East may be summed up in "non intervention" and "conciliation". But the American President Truman's political behaviour was different. It depended completely on his electoral politics. This was exasperating to Bevin. This was the result of a seeming incomprehension, on the part of the British statesmen and diplomats, of the working of the American political system particularly in the making of the foreign policy.

American political system, as we know, is dominated by the President. His Secretaries, who are members of his so called cabinet are only hand picked by him. Their departments do have expertise on the regions or the international scene as a whole. Therefore, their advice to the President is based on their expert knowledge. But the President can ignore this advice in the context of his domestic politics. On the crucial moments with reference to the Palestine issue the domestic compulsions proved to be

more compelling for the President than the almost objective advice of the Secretaries of State and Defense. Here came the Zionists. Through their influence mechanism and electoral weight they were able to influence the President's mind for their own end.

American Presidents were at that time unfamiliar with the realities of the Middle East. The fantasies of President Roosevelt on 'peacefully' resolving the Arab Zionist dispute were shocking. Far more significant were Truman's decisions. There were erratic shifts in United States policies on Palestine, particularly after the question was placed on the agenda of the United Nations' General Assembly. The American position before the General Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine in the fall of 1947 was developed essentially by the Department of State, and the pressures on friendly delegations before the final vote in the plenary Assembly session by the White House, thanks to the Zionists and their access to Truman. The latter went all alone pulling his weight for partition resolution and never consulted the State Department. He could not afford to be inimical to his Jewish electorate and Zionist supporters.

Like the policies of the United States, Soviet policies were determined by an interplay between an internal "Jewish

factor" and the perceived requirements of the Soviet interest in the Middle East as a whole in the context of the super power struggle.

As the political and social ferment in Russia exploded in Revolution of 1917 Britain's support to the Jewish National Home in Palestine through the Balfour Declaration provided added impetus to Communist hostility toward Zionism. For not only did the Declaration threaten to deflect or subvert the support of Jews for the Revolution at a critical moment, but also seemed to reveal Zionism as a vehicle of British imperialism and as a means of keeping suppressed the presumably revolutionary toiling Arab masses.

However, with the advent of World War II Stalin started to cultivating the Jews and the Zionists alike. Arab, especially the Palestinian leadership, fell from grace. Nonetheless, given the traditional Soviet hostility toward Zionism, it came as a surprise when in the fall of 1947 Soviet spokesmen in the United Nations declared their support for the idea of partition and the creation of independent Jewish and Arab states in Palestine. Ideology took a back seat while political expediency ruled the roost. This more than benevolent attitude toward the Zionists seems surprising not only in the light of the previous Soviet

hostility to Zionism but also in the perspective of subsequent Soviet policies which continue to the present days.

As the Palestine issue came up for decision, the United Nations had before it three alternatives. The first, recommended by the majority of its own special committee on Palestine urged partition; the second advanced by the minority of the Committee, advocated a federal Jewish-Arab state; and the third, pressed by the Arab delegations, insisted on independence for Palestine under the rule of its Arab majority. All these proposals envisaged the termination of the British Mandate, which was what the Soviets were interested in most. Moreover, the Soviets had already visualized that partition was the only proposal that had the chance of commanding the necessary two thirds majority, and was therefore the only proposal that promised to bring the end of the British rule in Palestine. Consequently, even though the Soviets would have intrinsically favored the federal proposal as Gromyko indicated in one of his speeches, they cast their vote and weight in favour of partition for the "practical reasons", that otherwise the United Nations would have reached a deadlock that would have allowed Britain to prolong its stay in Palestine.

In the context of the Soviet support for the Zionists, the Arabs could have thought of taking the support of the West which as a bloc was against the East, that is the Soviet Union. However this would not have paid any dividends. The West at its best was divided (due to the British Labour Party's opposition to the American support to Zionism) and at its worst was basically united against them (Arabs). Despite the transient British policy under the Labour Government the British society was as pro Zionist as the American one.

Moscow knew that Britain was so strongly entrenched in the Arab world that the Soviet Union would not be able to cash in on any pro-Arab position. In addition the real prospect, i.e. the ouster of the British would be jeopardized for the sake of a an ungainful popularity.

The Soviets had some other reasons also. They were resentful of the fact that Arab nationalist movements had taken a pro-axis orientation e.g. in Palestine it was led by the Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin Al-Husseini and in Egypt by Aziz al-Masri. The argument generally advanced by some writer was that Stalin approved of the partition of Palestine in a fit of absent-mindedness. This does not seem to be plausible.

Inspite of Soviet Union's support of partition the thrust of Arab anger was against the United States, which was seen as the architect of the partition plan. The Arab countries, ironically were staunchly "pro-Western " in the sense of being "anti Bolshevik" Half-hearted attempts to contact the Soviets were made only by some members of the Syrian delegation, though Haj Amin also might have been in contact with them.

The signal achievement of the Zionist diplomacy was the U.N. partition resolution of November 19, 1947. The Zionists for the first time in the history of their movement got an international sanction for the establishment of their own state.

The origins of the November resolution lay in the UNSCOP report, which at the end of August 1947 recommended British evacuation and termination of the Mandate.

The Zionists had visualised that without the forthright American support, the solution recommended by the UNSCOP majority report - partition - would not secure the required majority. The Zionists mounted both a widespread and intensive campaign, through Democratic Party channels and their supporters in the Congress.

Inspite of the declared support of both the American and the Soviet delegations the amended partition plan was adopted only narrowly on November 25, 1947, by the United Nations Ad hoc Committee on Palestine. There was just one vote short of the two third majority. The fact that the required majority was secured for the decisive vote just four days later was due to an unprecedently intensive Zionist campaigning that finally mobilized, at the eleventh hour, the support of the White House.

Witnesses on both the American and the Zionist side have nevertheless established that the White House, with or without the President's personal sanction, was involved in a pressure campaign to change the votes of those smaller countries that had either opposed or abstained from the vote on November 25.

Three days after the decisive passage of the partition resolution, the incharge of the Jewish Agency's New York office, Michael Camay wrote to a friend that the President Truman has got upset and threw his personal weight behind the effort to secure a decision. It was only in the last forty eight hours on Friday and Saturday that they got the full backing of the United States.

However, it would be fallacious to think that the Zionists and their supporters held any monopoly on pressure tactics. Since the beginning of the General Assembly, the Arab delegates had warned the Americans frequently that they would defect to the Soviet camp if the United States voted for partition. The Arab warning was of no consequence however, when the Soviets themselves declared in favour of partition in October 1947. The domestic political influence of the Zionists in America also outsmarted the threat of oil sanction by the Arabs. Ibn Saud himself had made it perfectly clear to American diplomats that, quite contrary to what the oil lobby in Washington was telling the State Department, he would not impose oil sanctions against the West due to any differences over Palestine.

Whatever the oil lobby might have conceived of pressuring the Americans or whatever the Arab oil-rich countries might have thought of influencing the West using oil as a force, the stark fact was that in 1947 the Arabs had no oil power whatsoever which they came to acquire only in 1973. Even in this latter year (1973) when they used oil as a political weapon they failed. Therefore to think of using oil as an instrument of pressure in 1947 was too transparent a bluff not to be called.

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